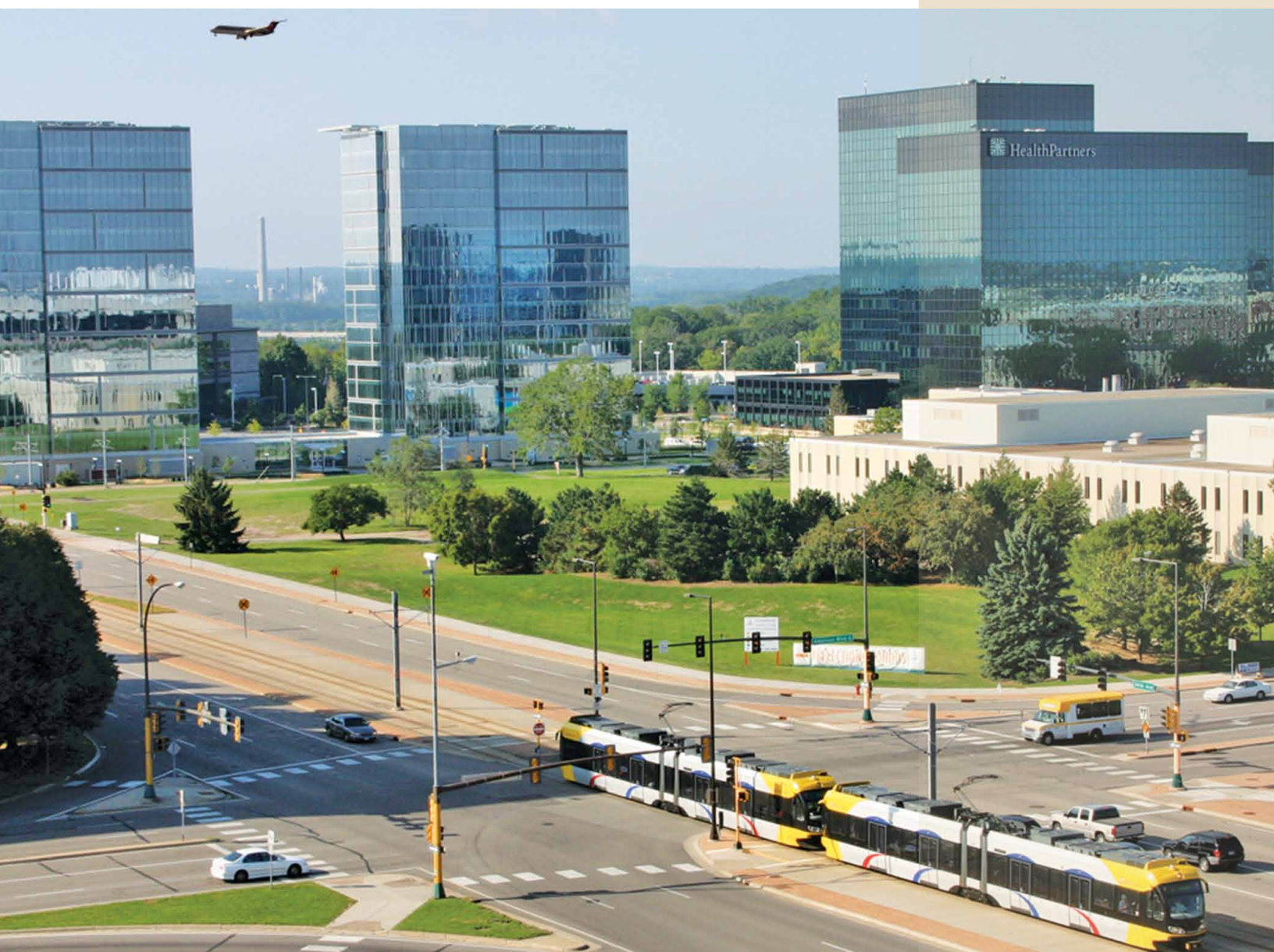


SOUTH LOOP DISTRICT PLAN



August 21, 2012

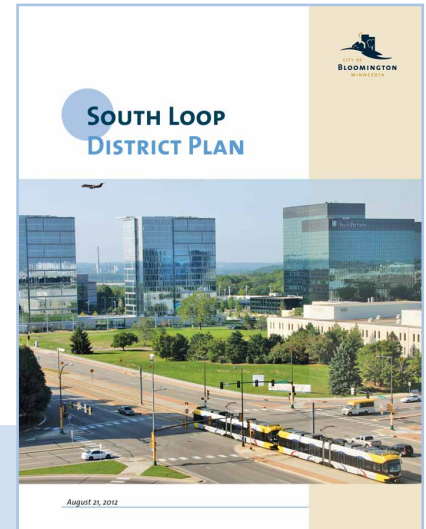


City of Bloomington, Minnesota

SOUTH LOOP DISTRICT PLAN

The Bloomington City Council placed this District Plan into effect on August 21, 2012, by adopting Resolution 2012-97. The Metropolitan Council adopted its review record of the plan on February 13, 2013, (File #20427-3).

Note that comprehensive plans are amended from time to time. The City maintains an up-to-date version of its *Comprehensive Plan* on its website: www.ci.bloomington.mn.us. A hard copy of the most current version is available at the Planning Division, Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN 55431-3027, PH 952-563-8920.



City Council

August 2012

Mayor	Councilmembers			
Gene Winstead		Jack Baloga	Thomas Hulting	Steve Peterson
		Tim Busse	Karen Nordstrom	Vern Wilcox

Planning Commission

August 2012

Chair	Commissioners			
Craig Nordstrom		Budd Batterson	Jon Oleson	Kelley Spiess
		Alan Felkner	Brandon Pierce	Roger Willette

City of Bloomington

May 2007 - August 2013

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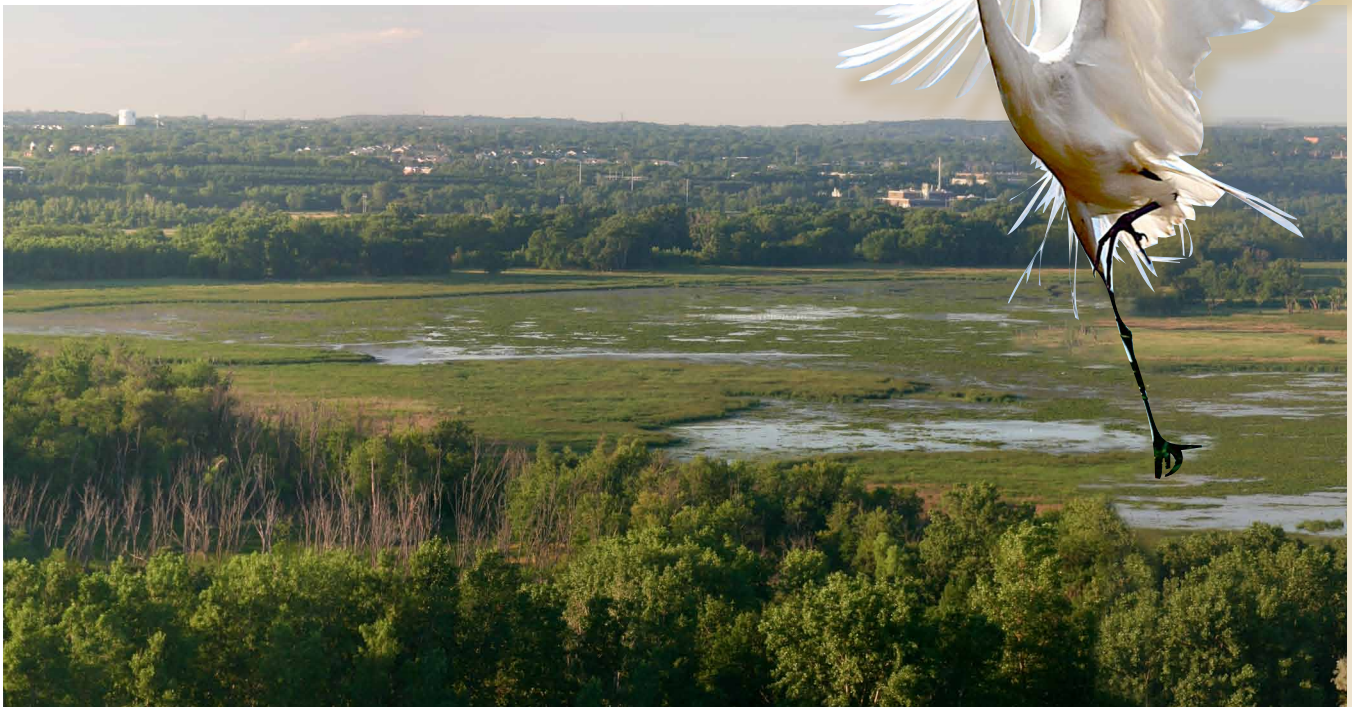
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Section 1

THE BIG STORY

On a warm day in May, a snowy egret perches in a tree near the water. Suddenly, she glides over Long Meadow Lake, dives for a shimmering fish and soars home with the morsel.



This is a special place. Ancient Woodland peoples built earthwork mounds along the bluff edge. Sports fans watched Harmon Killebrew slug one into the stands for the Twins and Neal Broten pass the puck down the ice to score for the North Stars. Years later, children wait eagerly for a rotund red-suited elf in the Mall's giant rotunda.



© 2009 NHL



© Minnesota Twins

North Star player Neal Broten, left, and Twins hitter Harmon Killebrew, above, delighted sports fans.

It is a distinctive place where people build their lives around work and community. Where people still feel connected to their environment. Where the wooded bluffs, meadows and marshlands of our Native American and pioneer ancestors are never more than footsteps away.

The South Loop District is not a retreat from modern life, but a confluence of environmental and economic forces. The District is a center for business and employment, connected to the Twin Cities metropolitan area by adjacent freeways and convenient transit, and to global centers such as Amsterdam, Tokyo, Paris, and London via direct flights from the nearby Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

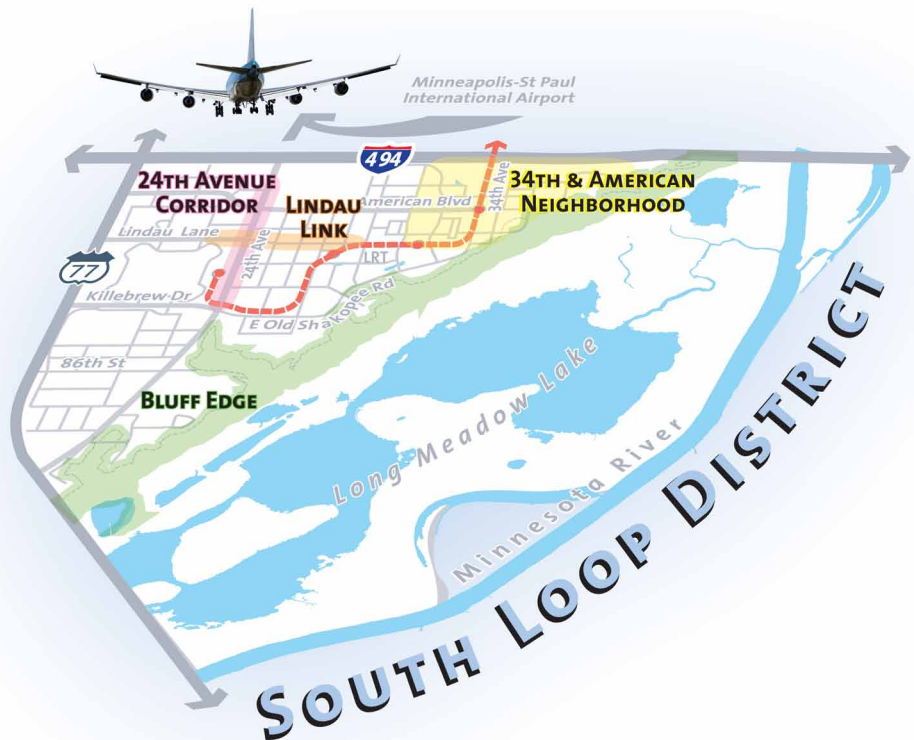
Why does South Loop prosper? Because it has unparalleled CONNECTIVITY; it is a regional center for COMMERCE; and it brings together urban development and natural RESOURCES in one place.



Along the bluffs were Native American mounds like these on the Robert Davis property.



Bloomington Central Station is located in the 34th and American Neighborhood.



Long Meadow Lake borders the District.

Mei-Hua finishes the latte she bought from her building's coffee shop, grabs her briefcase and dashes to the train station. She sees rain clouds approaching and hopes the weather won't affect her Chicago flight. Thankfully, the train is punctual as usual – she'll be through security and at her gate in less than half an hour.



Over the next 40 years, two-thirds of Bloomington's growth potential will be realized in the South Loop District. Put simply, the vision for South Loop is to transform the District from suburban to urban. The vision includes mixed land uses that support additional streets to enhance circulation; higher densities of jobs and homes close to two light rail stations; and sustainable development practices that save energy and support growth.



As soon as the brief thunderstorm passes, Ethan and his frisky pup Jake head to the nearby dog park. The air smells clean. The sidewalks are still wet. Ethan notices the landscape swales along the walk are half full of water. These water gardens collect stormwater from the surrounding blocks. The water is naturally filtered by the soil and carefully chosen plantings before it enters the groundwater and emerges from natural springs in the bluff.

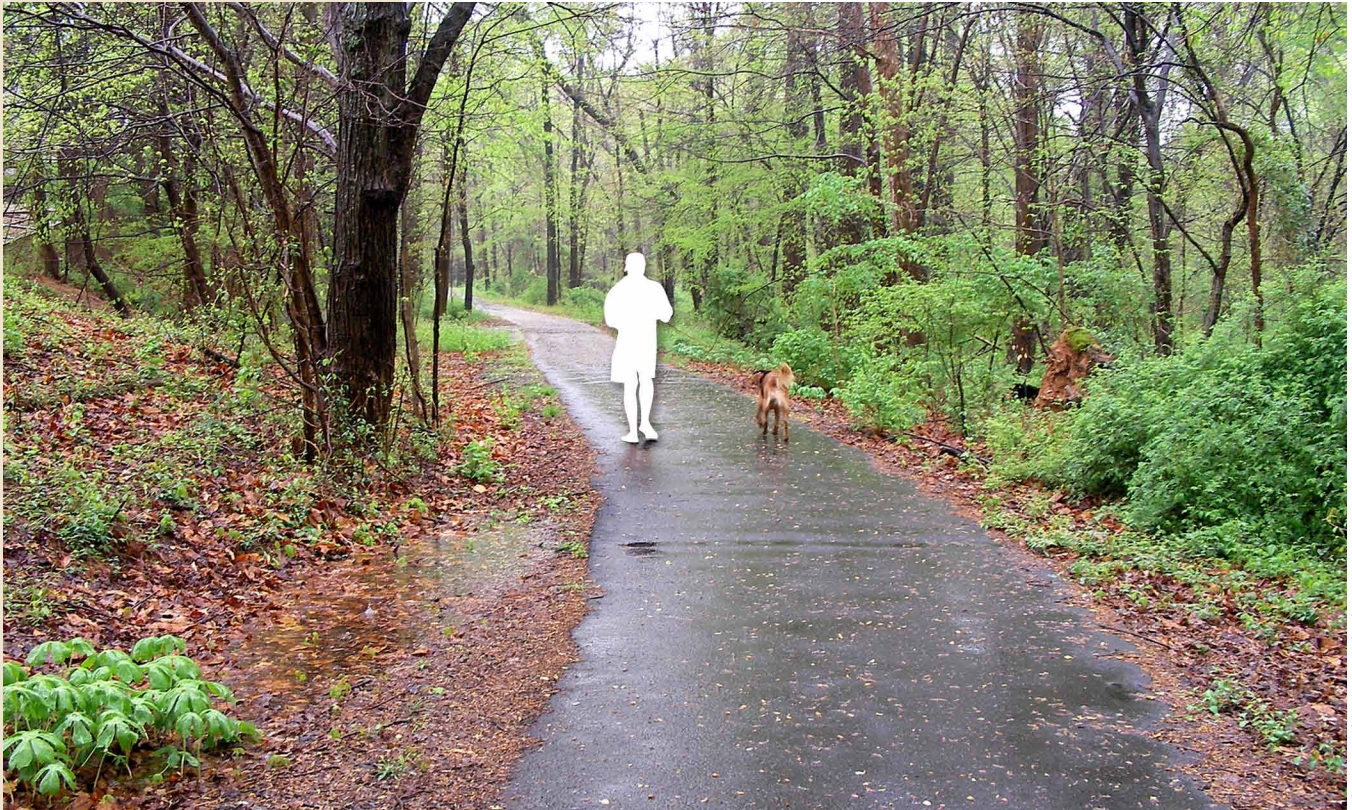


Photo credit: Big Stock Photos

A commitment to sustainable development is the foundation of the *South Loop District Plan*. The *Plan* describes the City's approaches to transit-oriented site design, storm water management, South Loop's interface with the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and energy efficiency.



Rain gardens efficiently cycle from heavy rain storms to dry conditions.

Home again and warm from the exercise, Ethan nudges the thermostat down a couple of degrees as Jake sprawls on the cool bamboo floor. Ethan tries to minimize his carbon footprint, and knows that his apartment's heating and cooling system runs on waste heat created during production of electricity. Jake hopes the savings from Ethan's next electric bill purchases a new chew toy.

The City is studying the feasibility of a district energy system that is 40 percent more efficient. Waste heat from the generation of electricity is captured and used to heat and cool buildings in the South Loop. District energy savings are an important competitive advantage for both businesses and residents who locate in the South Loop District.

Photo credit: Big Stock Photos



More efficient energy systems lower utility bills.



Luisa checks her watch as her train pulls into the Mall of America Station. Before she transfers to the 11:20 a.m. Bus Rapid Transit to Apple Valley, she has time to run upstairs into the Mall to buy a birthday gift.

Luisa enjoys her semi-retirement. She easily balances consultant work from her home with volunteer work for Friends of the Minnesota River Valley. Whether she travels locally or internationally, the District's public transit and the proximity to the airport make movement simple. She can't remember the last time she filled up her electric hybrid car.

Shoppers stroll the Mall of America's West Market.

Lindau Link, a key placemaking element of the *South Loop District Plan*, extends Bloomington Central Station's pedestrian-scale streets and improves visibility and access to the Mall of America. The street creates an attractive, landscaped environment with enhanced pedestrian amenities and transit service for new hotel, entertainment and office developments. It incorporates low-impact design and advanced storm water management and improves vehicle circulation in the District, postponing the need for intersection improvements and traffic management solutions.



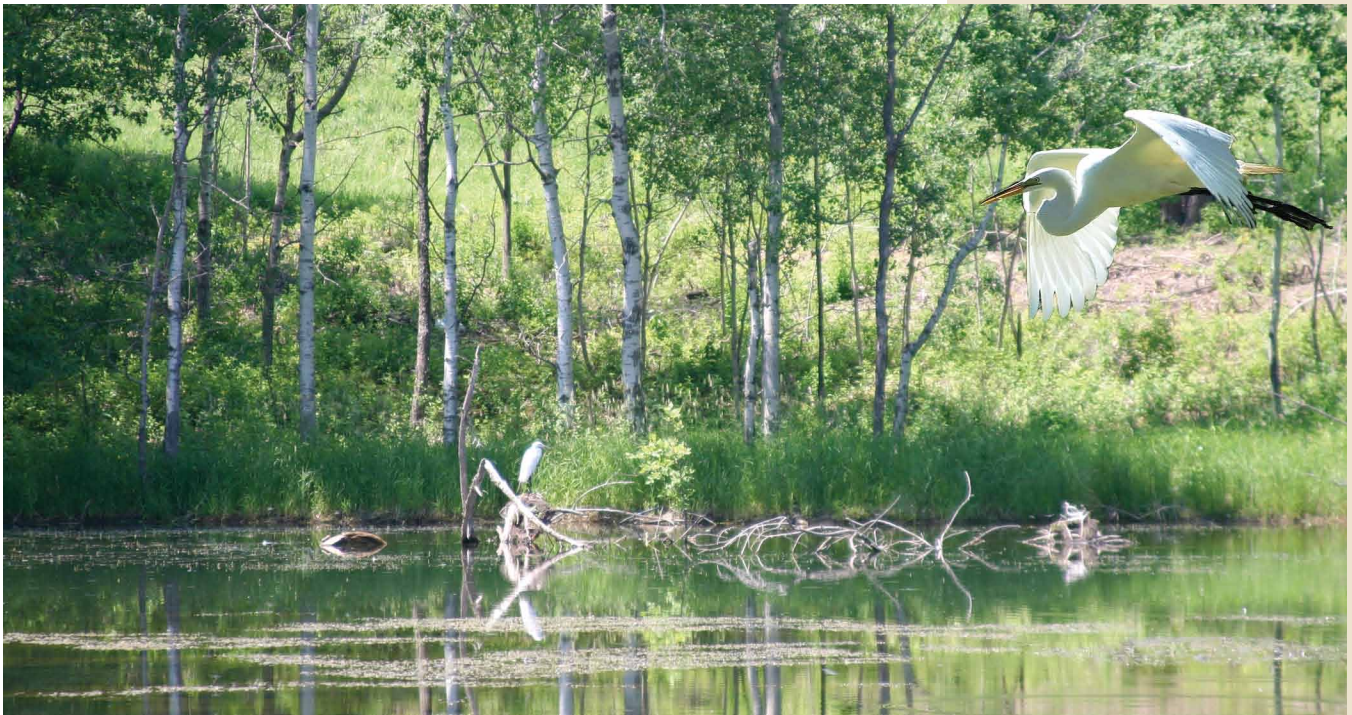
Credit: SRF Kinley-Horn Associates

Jake leaps for his new chew toy as Ethan heads out the door. Ethan's dropping some materials at his office and meeting his friend Mei-Hua at the new restaurant on Lindau Link. The stormy morning gave way to a beautiful spring evening. Everyone is enjoying the weather on bicycles and foot. The sidewalk cafes are packed, but Mei-Hua's meeting went so well that she was able to catch an early flight home and already has claimed a prime people-watching table. The pair wave to passing acquaintances and make plans to meet for the Saturday morning bird walk in the Wildlife Refuge where migrating trumpeter swans were spotted below the Kelley Farm trail access.



The *South Loop District Plan* identifies strategic public investments that lay the foundation for private investment and growth. The network of green streets and neighborhood parks, the LRT stations and 24th Avenue transit hub, and the sustainable infrastructure link the vibrant new residential neighborhood on the east side of the District to the commercial core along the Lindau Lane Greenway. Evidence of the nearness of nature and connection to the Wildlife Refuge is everywhere.

The revitalized South Loop District attracts new businesses and new residents to Bloomington. Property value increases as a result of the new development enable the City to maintain its high level of services without increasing taxes for residents or businesses. The District's development also reinforces the City's reputation as a forward-looking, high-quality community. The young professionals and families occupying the condominium and apartment units want to stay in the community when they are ready for single-family homes. Thousands of new jobs in the District provide opportunities for Bloomington and south metro residents to shorten their commutes, and to substitute travel by transit and bicycle. The South Loop District has become a distinctive place where people can build their lives and feel connected.



In the valley, an egret flies toward its nest to perform a greeting ritual for its mate. The scene is repeated at dozens of nests in the colony as the sun dips down towards the horizon.

1.2 Vision

To transform South Loop from a dispersed, suburban commercial area into a walkable urban neighborhood that attracts residents, office tenants, hotel guests and shoppers by virtue of its unique character and assets.

The primary goals to achieve this vision include:

1. **Build on** the District's unique mix of assets and mitigate its disadvantages.
2. **Transform** the District's densities and character from suburban to urban.
3. **Accelerate** the District's development.
4. Establish the District as a **branded place** emphasizing sustainability, quality, comfort, and safety.
5. Create a **sustainable** district.

Each goal is discussed in more detail on the following pages.

Goal 1 Leverage the District's assets.

- LRT and bus transit.
- Proximity of Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP).
- Regional freeway access and visibility.
- Visual and recreational opportunities of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.
- Mall of America and Bloomington Central Station developments.
- Sites available for development.

Goal 2 Mitigate the District's disadvantages.

- Aircraft noise.
- Airport zoning restrictions on uses and structure height.
- Access limited by freeways and the river valley surrounding the District.

Goal 3 Transform the District's density and character.

- Promote a mix of land uses based on Transit-Oriented Design (TOD) and sustainable development strategies.
- Establish a network of interconnected parks, open spaces, and trails.

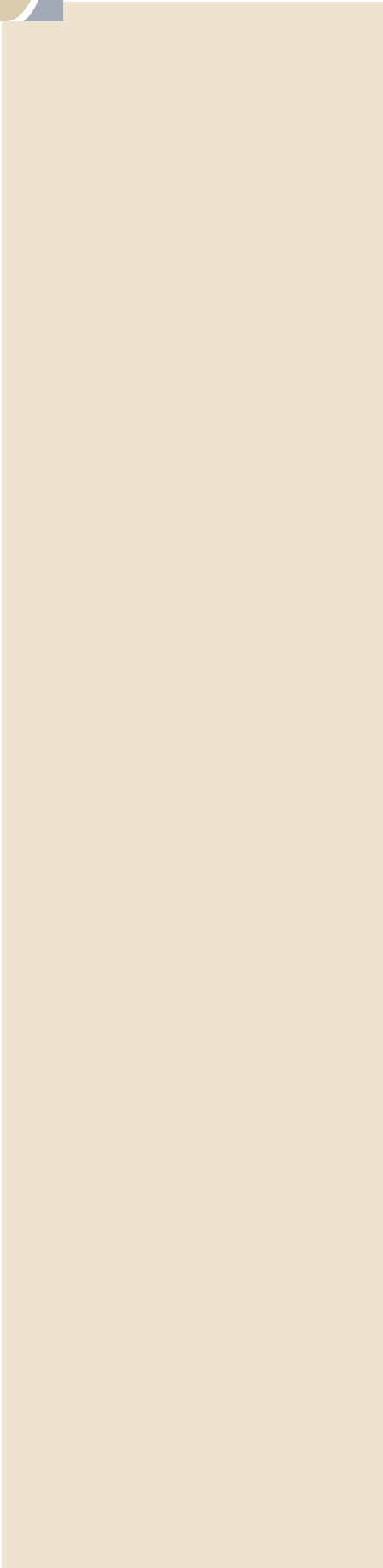
- Connect South Loop to potential MSP area development north of I-494.
- Provide a hierarchy of complete streets to increase connectivity, accessibility and movement.
- Create a safe, attractive walkable environment that makes it easy to get around on foot or bicycle.
- Design public spaces to enhance placemaking and complement private development.

Goal 4 Accelerate the District's development.

- Establish South Loop as a place branded for sustainability, quality, comfort, and safety, with a clear sense of place.
- Promote the advantages of balanced, transit-oriented development.
- Make strategic public investments that foster placemaking and leverage private investments.
- Commit resources to maintain the function and appearance of public spaces.
- Market publicly-owned development sites.
- Promote the District's assets.

Goal 5 Create a sustainable district.

- Promote energy conservation and low-impact site design techniques.
- Explore district-scale alternative energy systems.
- Foster denser, mixed-use development near transit stations.
- Implement an interconnected network of multi-modal streets and green infrastructure.
- Implement a shared parking strategy with on-street, surface, and structured spaces.
- Use intelligent transportation technology (ITS) to maximize the efficiency and capacity of the street network.
- Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods.
- Expand housing choices in Bloomington.
- Protect natural and cultural resources by applying best management practices.





Section 2 SUSTAINABILITY

The central organizing principle of the South Loop District Plan is *Sustainability*. Sustainability has multiple dimensions and there are no universally accepted definitions. It's meaning varies depending on context and perspective. One of the most widely cited definitions was developed in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission (formally the World Commission on Environment and Development), which describes sustainable development as: *development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

2.1 The Responsible Approach

In the most basic sense, sustainability refers to the capacity to endure and thrive. It has environmental, economic, and social dimensions often referred to as the three pillars or triple bottom line. It implies a **responsible** approach to development and use of resources. In the context of the *South Loop District Plan*, this means:

- Living within environmental limits;
- Understanding the interconnections among economy, society, and environment; and
- Equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

Other common aspects of sustainable and responsible development include:

- Respecting environmental capacity limits;
- Attention to maintenance and management;
- Balancing the range and types of costs and benefits;
- Flexibility and adaptation to change;
- Taking a comprehensive, holistic approach to planning and implementation; and
- Establishing measures or metrics to evaluate outcomes.





View the *State of Minnesota Sustainable Building Guidelines* (MSBG) online at <http://www.msbg.umn.edu/>.

2.2 Sustainability Goals and Measures

To ensure South Loop develops in a sustainable and responsible manner, this plan proposes a development framework that reflects the following sustainability goals:

1. Energy

Encourage efficient building, site, and infrastructure design that reduces fossil fuel use and carbon emissions.

2. Accessibility

Design and implement transportation systems that support planned development while allowing for reduced reliance on motor vehicles and promote use of transit and alternative transportation modes.

3. Green Infrastructure

Integrate natural system functions in the design of infrastructure systems, buildings, and sites to preserve and restore natural resources and maintain the area's natural resource base.

Measuring Sustainability

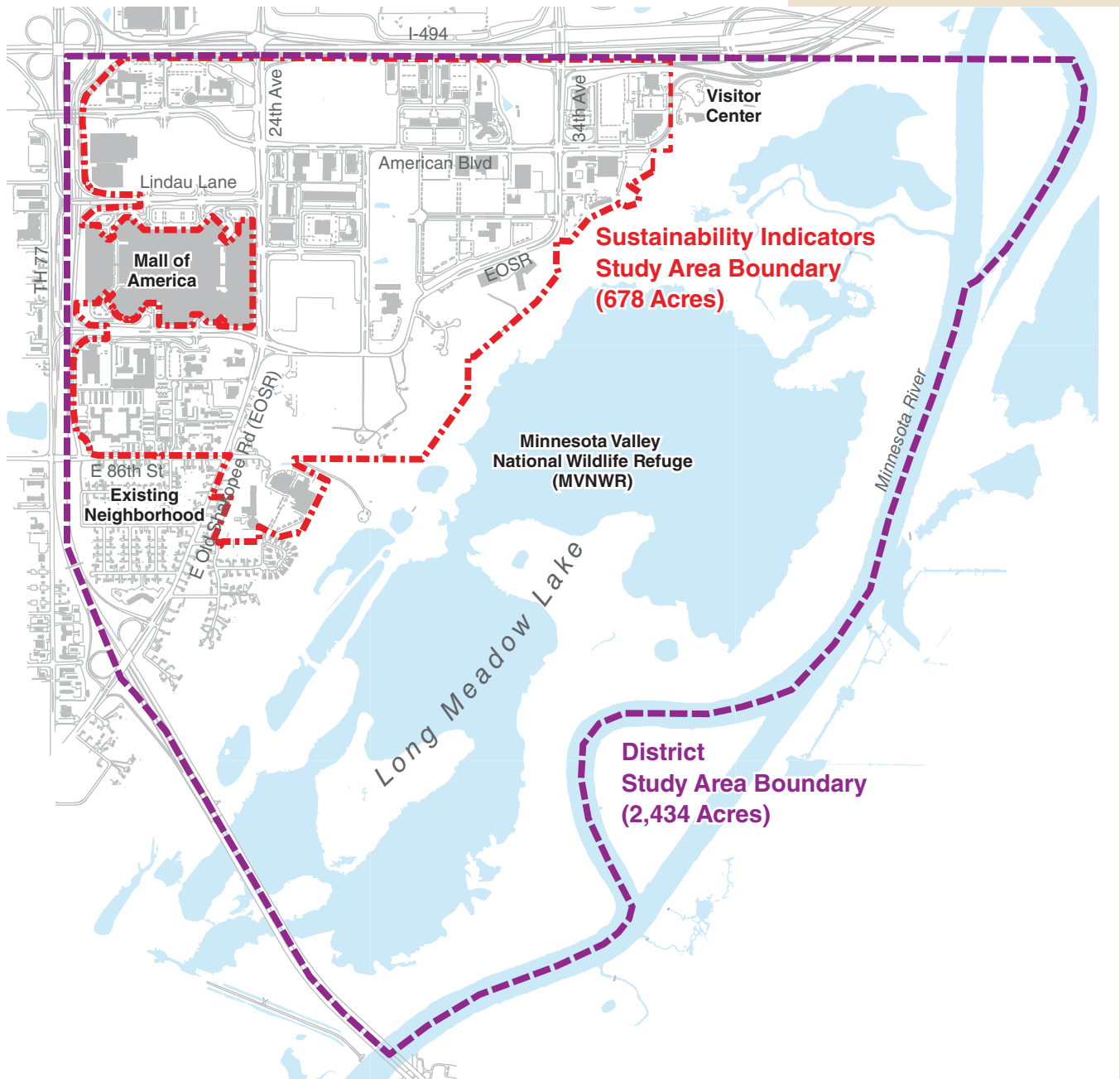
In preparing the South Loop District framework concept, INDEX software was used to evaluate sustainability based on select indicators that reflected the prime sustainability goals. INDEX is a geospatial-modeling tool that measures demographic, land use, housing, employment, recreation, environment, travel, and transportation implications of different physical design choices and development scenarios. For the South Loop District, the software was used to assess three development scenarios:

1. Existing conditions;
2. Trend scenario (future development based on current zoning and land use patterns); and
3. South Loop framework scenario (future development based on the proposed framework concept).

The study area used for the INDEX model only included the portion of South Loop where development changes are expected over the next 20-40 years. Thus, the existing Mall of America (MOA), the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR), and the existing residential neighborhood south of 86th Street were not included in the model. Due to their large numbers of jobs and open space, these areas would have greatly skewed the indicator results and made it difficult to detect differences among the scenarios. *See Figure 2.1 on next page.*

The three scenarios were analyzed based on measurable indicators for Energy, Accessibility, and Green Infrastructure.

Figure 2.1 INDEX Model Study Area



Source: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC, 2009.

Energy

Energy consumption and carbon emissions are leading indicators of sustainability. Buildings represent the largest segment of energy consumption, which is tied more strongly to building design and

operation than to the layout of streets and land uses within the district. Because building metrics change over time and the INDEX model does not measure building efficiency well, no specific indicators related to energy consumption



This LRT stop is located at
Bloomington Central Station.

were used in the model. Instead, it is recommended that buildings in South Loop follow the *State of Minnesota B3 Sustainable Building Guidelines*, which exceed the State energy code by at least 30 percent. See sidebar, page 2.2.

The measurable sustainability goal for energy is:

- **At least 30 percent** more energy savings over those required in the State energy code.

Accessibility

Making South Loop more accessible hinges on enhancing the bicycle network and increasing access to transit. A connected system of bicycle routes and convenient transit allows visitors, residents, and employees to travel to, from and within South Loop without getting into a car.

Four measurable sustainability indicators for accessibility show improvements over the trend scenario as follows:

- **Over 50 percent more** streets will have bicycle routes.
- **One third more** residents will be within walking distance (1/2 mile) of a transit stop.



- **Over 23 percent decrease** in the distance residents walk to reach transit.

- **Over 32 percent decrease** in the distance employees walk to reach transit.

Green Infrastructure

Integrating green infrastructure into South Loop involves creating open spaces, such as parks and playgrounds, providing green connections between open spaces, such as tree-lined, landscaped boulevards, and using pervious materials where practical to allow on-site infiltration of rainwater. All of these “best practices” can improve aesthetics, provide cooling shade, and help manage stormwater runoff.

Two measurable sustainability indicators for green infrastructure show improvements over the trend scenario as follows:

- **Over 50 percent more** residents in the district will be within a short walk (1/4 mile) of a park or schoolyard.
- **Nearly one third** of all land in South Loop, north of 86th Street and excluding the MVNWR, will be dedicated open space.

INDEX Results

In the INDEX model, the indicators were categorized under Accessibility and Green Infrastructure to correspond to the primary sustainability goals. As noted above, no specific numeric indicators were set for energy consumption, which is largely a factor of building design and operations. The table below compares the indicator scores of the two future development scenarios: one based on future development according to existing zoning and

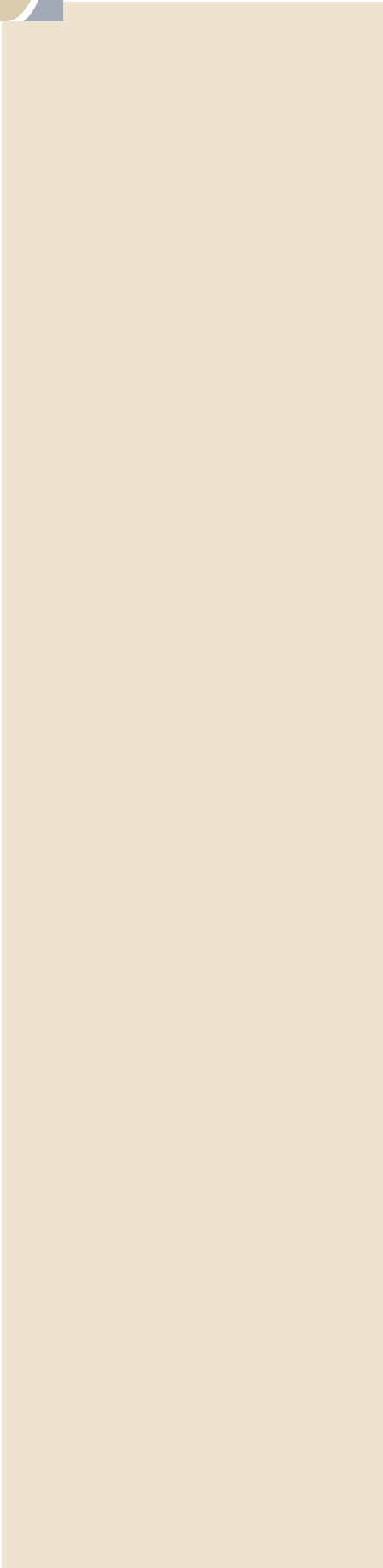
land use patterns and the other based on the South Loop Framework concept described in this plan. See **Section 3.0, pages 3.1 - 3.86.**

As shown below, implementing the development pattern of land uses, streets, parks and trails proposed in the Framework Concepts can result in increased accessibility and green space beyond what might occur if development followed existing plans and zoning.

Table 2.1 Summary of INDEX Results

Definition		Trend Scenario	Framework Plan	Change from Trend
Accessibility				
Bicycle Network Coverage	Percent of streets with designated bike route	27	41	14 (+52.0%)
Transit-Oriented Residential Density	Dwelling units per acre within walking distance (a half mile) of transit stops	32	43	11 (+34.0%)
Transit Proximity to Residential	Average walking distance (ft.) between residential uses and closest transit stop	1,190	847	262 (-23.6%)
Transit Proximity to Employment	Average walking distance (ft.) between place of employment and closest transit stop	1,360	920	440 (-32.0%)
Green Infrastructure				
Park/Schoolyard Adjacency to Housing	Percent of residents within a quarter mile of parks or schoolyards	66	100	34 (+52.0%)
Open Space Share	Percentage of land area dedicated to open space	0.4	31	30.6 (+7,650.0%)

Source: INDEX Model Analysis, 2009.





Section 3

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3.1 The Big Picture

This section summarizes the factors that underlie the vision for future development in South Loop described in the *Signature Elements, Section 3.2, pages 3.13 - 3.36*, and *Framework Plans, Section 3.3, pages 3.37 - 3.86*.

3.1.1 Why is the South Loop Important to Bloomington?

- Represents two-thirds of the City's forecast residential and commercial development potential.
- Allows City to maximize benefits from substantial federal and regional public investment in the airport, in highways, in transit, and in a national wildlife refuge.
- City investment in public infrastructure such as utilities, streets, open space and landscape is more efficient when it serves more people.
- Adds to the City's housing choices and neighborhood variety.
- Serves as a catalyst for improved transit and recreational trail access throughout Bloomington.
- Enhances the City's financial strength by growing the tax base.

3.1.2 Trends that will Help South Loop

Trends observed in the region, across the nation, and internationally indicate that the vision for South Loop – as a walkable, mixed use, urban neighborhood – is not only viable, but will play an important role in ensuring Bloomington remains a top choice for new businesses and residents.

- **People are seeking high density, walkable neighborhoods:** Research suggests that about one in three homeowners prefer to live in high density, walkable districts inside and outside of downtown areas. Yet only about 10 percent of housing is located in such places, resulting in pent up demand.
- **Consumers prefer smaller homes close to job centers:** Demographic changes – particularly the increase in people living alone – is reflected in increased demand for smaller



South Loop's development potential makes Bloomington a top choice for new commerce.



Credit: Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport

The Minneapolis-St. Paul (MSP) International Airport that is directly north of the District provides access to national and international destinations.



Credit: Big Stock Photo

homes. Young adults establishing their careers tend to prefer to live near where they work.

- **Transit-oriented districts will develop faster:** Work places and residents located within walking distance to transit allow people to significantly reduce vehicle use and associated costs. These efficiencies add to market demand for locations with convenient transit services.

- **MSP International Airport will grow:** The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) projects that departures at MSP will grow 28 percent by 2020 and up to 67 percent by 2030. Convenient access to a major airport offering direct connections to national and international destinations will become increasingly important for businesses and employees involved in the global marketplace.

- **The Twin Cities region attracts young professionals:** In 2011 Forbes ranked the Twin Cities metro area #10 among metropolitan regions most attractive to young professionals (24 to 34 years old, holding a Bachelor's or graduate degree). These young professionals

have shown a preference for more efficient living patterns and transportation systems providing a range of options from bicycle paths and sidewalks to convenient transit services.

- **Economic clusters will be development engines:**

Bloomington's semiconductor, hospitality and retail clusters, already located in South Loop, are currently expanding or planned to grow. The health care industry also has a strong presence in South Loop as the headquarters for Health Partners, which may attract new development in emerging medical technology industries.

- **Successful growth strategies will consider the environment:**

Businesses in and near compact neighborhoods thrive because these areas offer conveniences, variety, and amenities that attract people. Market studies show that 25 to 30 percent of potential home buyers prefer these sustainable neighborhoods. This trend is expected to strengthen as the population ages.

3.1.3 Strategic Priorities

The following strategic priorities form the core of the *South Loop District Plan* vision. Setting priorities acknowledges that choices must be made to maximize allocation of limited staff and funding resources.

1. Foster Sustainable Development

Making South Loop a model of sustainability is central to the vision for the District. With the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge

(MVNWR) defining its east and south edge, South Loop enjoys convenient access to an extensive natural area and nature-based recreation. This interface also carries a responsibility to protect those resources and minimize development impacts.

Site design, building performance, and public infrastructure must reflect best practices in low impact, energy-efficient, and sustainable development. Sustainability can also be an important factor in attracting businesses as well as residents.

2. Establish Lindau Link as a Distinctive Place Connecting MOA and BCS

South Loop is anchored by two significant developments: Mall of America (MOA) and Bloomington Central Station (BCS). Physically and visually connecting these two development anchors and creating a core concentration of development between them is critical to making South Loop feel and function like a cohesive district. Lindau Link will be designed with a distinct physical character, creating a strong sense of place in South Loop. It will serve as a major pedestrian and transit corridor through the heart of South Loop and also help disperse vehicular traffic.

3. Make South Loop Smaller

South Loop north of 86th Street has mostly developed with large buildings and associated surface parking lots, which often occupy full blocks of land. The result is a typical suburban landscape lacking a sense of pedestrian scale and amenities. One of the aims of the *South Loop District Plan* is to encourage mixed use development within a fine-grained network of pedestrian-friendly, walkable streets. Streets with active storefronts and pedestrian amenities create a more comfortable and inviting environment for walking and gathering.

4. Strategic Investments

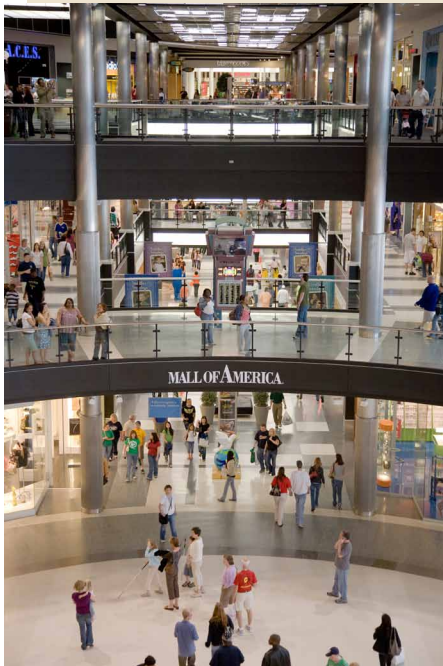
It will take many years for South Loop to fully develop. Given the evolving development environment, it is increasingly important to make strategic public investment commitments that create shared value. In South Loop, priority should be given to physical improvements that incent development along Lindau Link and complete key concepts described by the Signature Elements, describe in **Section 3.2**.

It is also essential to invest in opportunities that leverage other public and private investments in South Loop.

5. Enhance Neighborhood Livability

South Loop is intended as much as a place to live, as it is a place to work and enjoy leisure activities. Much of the south half of the District consists of an established residential neighborhood envisioned to remain intact. New residential neighborhoods are proposed in the northeast portion of South Loop. Whether a neighborhood is new or old, well-maintained and safe public facilities are essential to livability. Sidewalks, bike paths, and parks are amenities that make neighborhoods attractive and more livable. South Loop residents enjoy convenient access to the MVNWR and excellent transit service. Maintaining and improving upon these assets is an on-going objective.





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3.1.4 Growth Projections and Demographics

South Loop is projected to accommodate two-thirds (66 percent) of Bloomington's forecast growth in population, housing, and employment through 2050. While this translates into a significant amount of new development, historical development patterns in the District and emerging development trends indicate that the projected development is attainable.

Key Findings

- Transforming the development pattern from typical suburban to a more vibrant, compact and urban pattern is key to making South Loop a premiere location for new, mixed use development in the Twin Cities region. However, this will require creative development tools and strategic public investments in public amenities and infrastructure.
- Proximity to Minneapolis-St. Paul (MSP) International Airport makes South Loop a unique location to attract development that is reliant on convenient access to air travel.
- Two major developments anchor South Loop: Mall of America (MOA) and Bloomington Central Station (BCS). Concentrating future development along a new, pedestrian-friendly street (Lindau Link) will physically connect these two anchors, establish a concentration of activity, and create a strong identity for South Loop.
- Creating new work places will drive development in South Loop. While the District is not currently considered a Class-A office location within the region, strategic public realm enhancements and opportunities for transit-oriented development will establish South Loop as a new high-amenity office location.
- The MOA functions as a major retail destination, regionally and nationally. New retail/commercial development will primarily be aimed at serving South Loop residents and employees.
- South Loop comprises the region's second-largest concentration of hotel rooms, behind downtown Minneapolis. New office development in South Loop will generate opportunities for additional growth in lodging.
- Redevelopment sites near the intersection of 34th Avenue and American Boulevard present opportunities for new residential development to establish a transit-oriented neighborhood centered around the American Boulevard LRT station. This new residential neighborhood may lead the District's transformation for the first decade.
- Between 2010 and 2030 the District is projected to add 1,700 new dwellings. This is clearly an achievable goal as it represents less than one percent of the approximate 310,000 new dwellings projected to be added in the Metro Area during the same period.

Development Projections

The South Loop District's full development horizon extends out forty years to 2050. This long time frame was chosen in light of the ample land available for redevelopment and the anticipated slow economic recovery. Projections were also compiled for 2030 to illustrate mid-term development forecasts and to reflect the planning horizon for the City's *Comprehensive Plan* and the Metropolitan Council's *Regional Development Framework*.

Table 3.1, below, indicates the amount of development projected in South Loop by land use type. **Table 3.2, page 3.6,** projects the magnitude of development change for the two development phases: 2030 and 2050. It was assumed most new development, including all new residential development, will be located north of 86th Street. The area south of 86th Street is expected to remain as a stable, mostly single-family neighborhood.

The future development projections also considered the following factors and assumptions:

- Projections include proposed future development approved by the City Council, including: MOA expansion, BCS master plan, and Polar Semiconductor-Phase III.

- Future development amounts on sites without previously approved development plans were calculated on a parcel specific basis using the City's "Forecast Tracker" model.
- Future development, particularly office, was assumed to be more compact with smaller, more efficient buildings and sites to reduce costs and conserve energy. A basic office development model of 200,000 square feet was assumed to be typical.
- Higher density development will be located to leverage investments in existing development and infrastructure. This is represented by the L-shaped area encompassing Lindau Link and the area around the American Boulevard LRT station.
- Existing airport zoning development limitations (uses, height, etc.) are assumed to remain in place through 2050.
- Given the amount of retail development in MOA (existing and planned expansion), it was assumed that other new retail would be limited to small amounts of convenience retail and commercial service uses supporting specific office, hotel, and/or residential development.

Table 3.1 South Loop District Development by Land Use Type

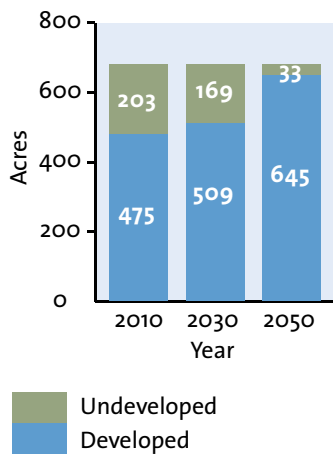
	Office and Office/Tech in s.f.	Retail in s.f.	Hotel in s.f.	Hotel Rooms	Residential Units
2010	3,174,000	4,575,000	1,596,300	2,884	1,166
2030	5,598,000	6,595,000	2,267,300	4,876	2,956
2050	8,574,000	8,125,000	2,890,440	6,216	4,102

Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.





Figure 3.2
Comparison of Developed and Undeveloped Land North of 86th Street, 2010-2050



Note: Total 678 acres, excluding existing and future roads.
Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.

Table 3.2 Change in South Loop Development, 2030 and 2050

Change	Office and Office/Tech in s.f.	Retail in s.f.	Hotel in s.f.	Hotel Rooms	Residential Units
2010 - 2030	+ 2,424,000 (+ 76%)	+ 2,020,000 (+ 44%)	+ 671,000 (+ 42%)	+ 1,992 (+ 69%)	+ 1,790 (+ 153%)
2030 - 2050	+ 2,976,000	+ 1,530,000	+ 623,140	+ 1,340	+ 1,146
Total 2010 - 2050	+ 5,400,000 (+ 170%)	+ 3,550,000 (+ 77%)	+ 1,294,140 (+ 81%)	+ 3,332 (+ 115%)	+ 2,936 (+ 252%)

Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.

As shown above, office development is projected to more than triple over the next 40 years, making South

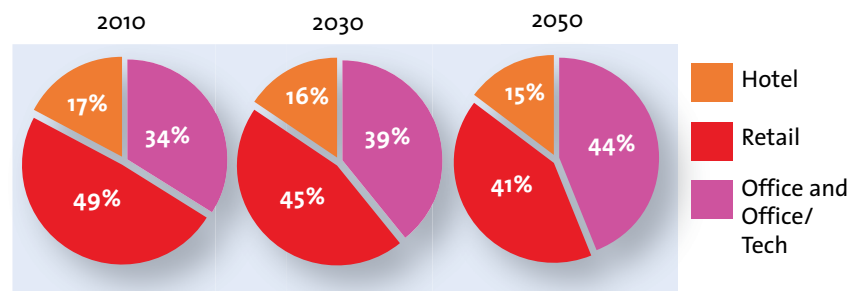
Loop a vital office center in the metropolitan region.

South Loop Development Pattern and Distribution

Figure 3.1, below, illustrates the breakdown of developed floor area for the three main types of development in South Loop. Currently, retail uses represent the majority (49 percent) of development in South Loop. Office and office/tech development represents about 34 percent of current development, but is projected to grow more than any other land use type. By 2050, office and office tech development is projected to represent 44 percent of all development.

Currently, undeveloped land accounts for about 30 percent (203 acres) of the total developable area (678 acres) of South Loop north of 86th Street. By 2030, about 75 percent (509 acres) of South Loop will be developed and vacant land will comprise about 25 percent (162 acres). By 2050, most of South Loop will be developed; however, about 5 percent (33 acres) comprises the Runway Protection Zone and will remain undeveloped. See **Figure 3.2, left sidebar.**

Figure 3.1
Comparison of Floor Area by Development Type, 2010-2050



Note: Only land area north of 86th Street included in tabulation.
Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.

Demographic Projections

Like the development projections, future demographics for South Loop were projected for the near-term (2030) and full-term (2050) development phases. Existing demographic numbers were derived from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MnDEED) and the 2010 U.S. Census. The housing unit counts include the existing dwellings located south of 86th Street, however all new housing units will be located north of 86th Street.

Demographic assumptions

- Housing unit counts reflect planned/approved units or estimated units based on current density parameters.
- By 2030, 10-15 percent of new housing units should be affordable to home-owners earning 60 percent of the metro area median income

and renters earning 50 percent of the metro area median income.

- Household counts assumed vacancy rates of 1.9 percent for single family (SF) and 4.3 percent for multi-family (MF).
- Population counts assumed occupancy of 2.62 person/DU in SF and 1.65 persons/DU in MF.
- Projections assumed the following employee rates per square foot of development:

Office = 0.0033/s.f.

Retail = 0.0025/s.f.

Hotel = 0.4/room

Office/Tech = 0.00172/s.f.

Table 3.3, below, summarizes demographic projections for South Loop from 2010 through 2050. **Table 3.4, below,** illustrates the magnitude of change anticipated during each development phase.



Table 3.3 South Loop Demographics, 2010 to 2050

	Population	Households	Housing Units	Employment (Jobs)
Existing (2010)	2,025	1,044	1,166	30,946
2030	4,852	2,758	2,956	44,793
2050	6,739	3,856	4,102	58,976

Source: City of Bloomington, 2009, MnDEED and 2010 U.S. Census.

Table 3.4 South Loop Demographic Change, 2010 to 2050

Change	Population	Households	Housing Units	Employment (Jobs)
2010 - 2030	+ 2,827	+ 1,714	+ 1,790 (180 - 270 Affordable Units)	+ 13,847
2030 - 2050	+ 1,887	+ 1,098	+ 1,146 (114 - 170 Affordable Units)	+ 14,183
Total 2010 - 2050	+ 4,714 (+ 233%)	+ 2,812 (+ 269%)	+ 2,936 (294 - 440 Affordable Units) (+ 154%)	+ 28,030 (+ 91%)

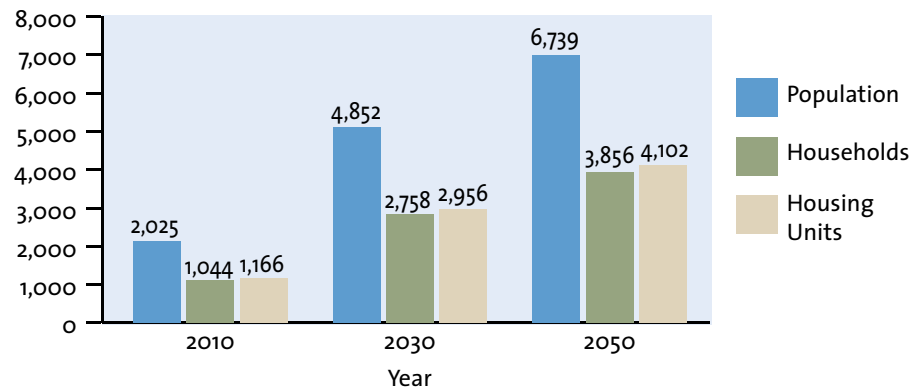
Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.



These projections underscore the significance South Loop will have in Bloomington's growth over the next several decades. The large increase in population (233 percent) is attributed in part to the fact that relatively few people currently live north of 86th

Street, where all new residential development in South Loop is planned to be located. **Figure 3.3, below**, illustrates projected growth in population, households, and housing units through 2050.

Figure 3.3
South Loop Population and Housing Growth, 2010-2050



Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.

Projected changes in employment are shown by industry type in **Tables 3.5 and 3.6, below**. This comparison clearly illustrates that the office and retail sectors will continue to be the primary employers in South

Loop. It is also apparent that, while currently, retail jobs dominate; by 2050 office related jobs are projected to be the primary type of employment in South Loop.

Table 3.5 South Loop District Employment by Industry Type (Jobs)

	Office and Office/Tech	Retail	Hotel
Existing	12,973	16,327	1,646
2030	21,680	20,667	2,446
2050	32,042	23,997	2,937

Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.

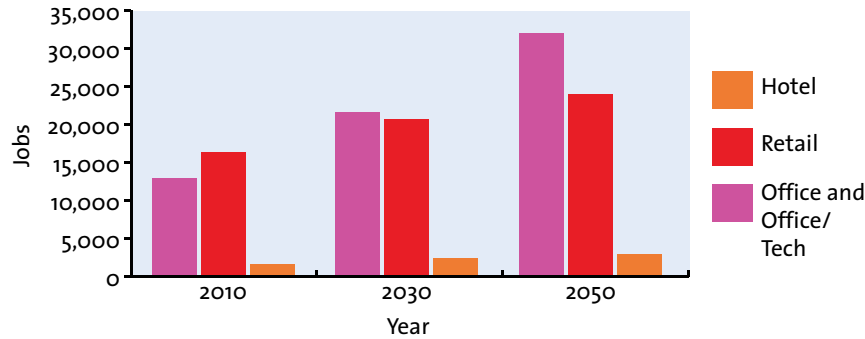
Table 3.6 South Loop District Employment Change (Jobs)

Change	Office and Office/Tech	Retail	Hotel
2010 - 2030	+ 8,707	+ 4,340	+ 800
2030 - 2050	+ 10,362	+ 3,330	+ 491
Total 2010 - 2050	+ 19,069 (+ 147%)	+ 7,670 (+ 47%)	+ 1,291 (+ 78%)

Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.

Figure 3.4, below, depicts employment changes projected for South Loop between 2010 and 2050.

Figure 3.4
Employment Change by Land Use Type, 2010-2050



Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.

Demographic Projections in Context of the Region

The South Loop District is anticipated to account for two-thirds of Bloomington's forecast growth between 2010 to 2050. As such, the District plays a key role in defining the city's place in the region. Data

in *Tables 3.7 through 3.10, below and on the following page*, describe the demographic characteristics of South Loop in context of Bloomington, Hennepin County, and the 7-County Metro Region.

Table 3.7
South Loop District and Bloomington Data, 2010 and 2030

	Population		Households		Employment (Jobs)	
	2010	2030	2010	2030	2010	2030
South Loop	2,025	4,852	1,044	2,758	30,946	44,793
Bloomington	82,893	88,953	35,905	39,531	88,928	113,118
South Loop as % of Bloomington	2.4%	5.5%	2.9%	7.0%	34.8%	39.6%

Source: City of Bloomington, 2009, MnDEED, 2010 U.S. Census.

Table 3.8 Population Growth, 2010 and 2030

Area	Population		Growth	
	2010	2030	Total Growth	% Increase
South Loop	2,025	4,852	2,827	139.6%
Bloomington	82,893	88,953	6,060	7.3%
Hennepin County	1,152,425	1,397,310	244,885	21.2%
Metro Area*	2,849,567	3,608,000	758,433	26.6%

Source: City of Bloomington and Metropolitan Council, 2012.

* Metro Area includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties.



**Table 3.9 Household Growth, 2010 and 2030**

Area	Households		Growth	
	2010	2030	Total Growth	% Increase
South Loop	1,044	2,758	1,714	164.2%
Bloomington	35,905	39,531	3,626	10.1%
Hennepin County	475,913	594,465	118,552	24.9%
Metro Area*	1,117,749	1,492,000	374,251	33.5%

Source: City of Bloomington and Metropolitan Council, 2012.

Table 3.10 Employment Growth, 2010 and 2030

Area	Employment (Jobs)		Growth	
	2010	2030	Total Growth	% Increase
South Loop	30,946	44,793	13,847	44.7%
Bloomington	88,928	113,118	24,190	27.2%
Hennepin County	948,430	1,136,260	187,830	19.8%
Metro Area*	1,816,000	2,126,000	310,000	17.1%

Source: City of Bloomington and Metropolitan Council, 2012.

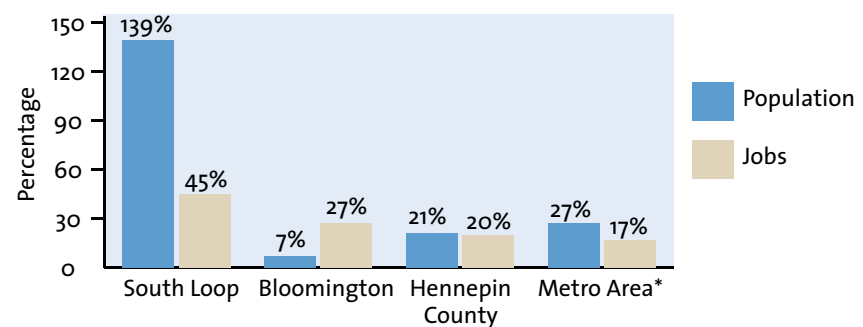
The comparative data in **Tables 3.9 and 3.10**, above, suggest that while projected development in South Loop is ambitious, it is also reasonably attainable in context of anticipated regional growth through 2030.

To meet the 2030 projections, South Loop will need to capture:

- 0.5 percent (1,700 out of 374,000) of total new housing units projected for the metro region; and

- 4.5 percent (13,800 out of 310,000) of total additional jobs projected for the metro region.

Given the small size of South Loop relative to the Metro Area, the magnitude of growth in South Loop is best illustrated by comparing the growth rates of Bloomington, Hennepin County, and the rest of the 7-County Metro Area. As shown in **Figure 3.5**, below, the growth rate

**Figure 3.5
Population and Employment Growth Rates, 2010-2030**

Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.

* The Metro Area includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties.

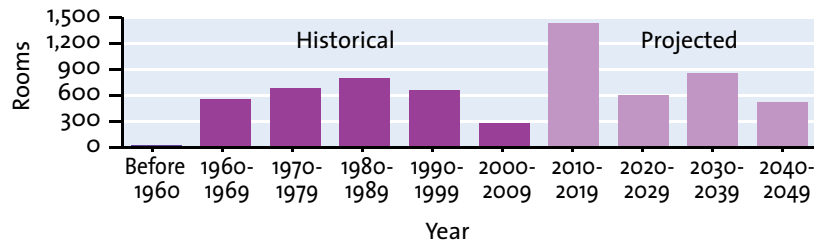
of population and jobs in South Loop exceeds the rates for the City, County, and Metro Region during the period 2010 to 2030.

Historical growth patterns, shown in **Figures 3.6 through 3.9**, below, also

suggest the amount of development projected in South Loop is attainable, particularly in light of national development trends that show pent up demand for high density, transit-oriented, walkable districts outside of downtowns.

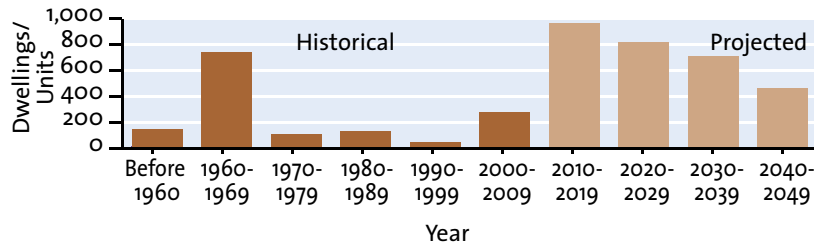


Figure 3.6
Historical and Projected Growth Patterns for Hotel Development



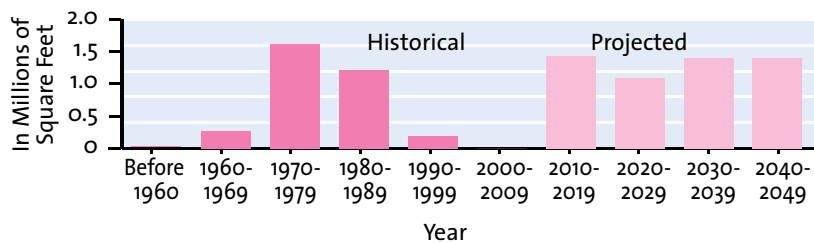
Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.

Figure 3.7
Historical and Projected Growth Patterns for Residential Development



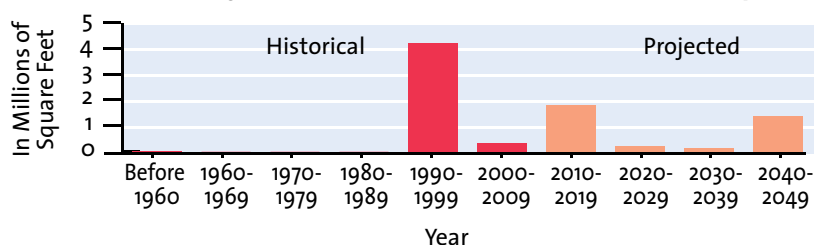
Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.

Figure 3.8
Historical and Projected Growth Patterns for Office Development



Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.

Figure 3.9
Historical and Projected Growth Patterns for Retail Development



Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.



Walkable districts around the U.S. have successfully attracted a disproportionate share of their region's new commercial and residential growth.

South Loop has several competitive advantages that will foster transit-oriented development and attract new development, including:

- Four LRT stations and excellent bus service, including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and rapid bus service, with convenient connections to downtown Minneapolis, St. Paul, and the region.
- Most of South Loop north of 86th Street is within a quarter mile of an LRT station. This is commonly accepted as a distance people will walk to use transit.
- Connections to the metro area regional trails system via the intercity and Nine Mile regional trails and proposed Minnesota Valley State Trail.
- Proximity to MSP International Airport, which is planned to expand to accommodate a projected 67 percent increase in departures by 2030. Good regional and international transportation access is critical in the global marketplace.

Transforming South Loop into a walkable, higher density district is key to meeting the 2030 and 2050 development projections. The following sections of this plan, particularly the ***Signature Elements, Section 3.2, pages 3.13 - 3.36***, and ***Framework Plans, Section 3.3, pages 3.37 - 3.86***, describe strategic public investments that will be critical to this transformation.



Section 3

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3.2 Signature Elements

Signature elements illustrate the primary concepts recommended in this Plan applied to four specific locations in South Loop, shown in **Figure 3.10** below. They highlight key land use, urban design, and sustainability concepts that will transform South Loop into a walkable, mixed-use urban neighborhood.

Many of the ideas presented in individual signature elements can be applied in other locations in South Loop. However, the signature elements represent priority areas for implementation.

Figure 3.10 Location of South Loop District's Signature Elements



Source: Bloomington Planning Division, 2011.

3.2.1 Lindau Link

Lindau Link is envisioned as a place to gather, linger, and meander. It will be designed as a “complete street” that invites pedestrians and accommodates bicyclists, drivers, and transit. *See right sidebar on next page.* Its streetscape will foster storefront and sidewalk-level activity and incorporate sustainable design and stormwater practices. It will establish a direct, pedestrian-oriented connection between South Loop’s two anchor developments – Mall of America (MOA) and Bloomington Central Station (BCS). *See Figure 3.11, below, Figure 3.12, page 3.17, and Figure 3.13, page 3.19, for illustrations of the projected future development.*

Location

Lindau Link extends between 24th Avenue and BCS. Between 24th and 30th Avenues, it will function as a

through road, generally following the existing 81st Street alignment. East of 30th Avenue, Lindau Link becomes a pedestrian and bicycle only corridor

Figure 3.11 Looking North at Lindau Link from 24th Avenue

The street functions for a variety of users – pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers and transit

Three to five-story offices front Lindau with parking located behind buildings

Flexible on-street parking supports ground-floor retail and service businesses



Public plazas and visual landmarks create identity and promote street-level activities

A more urban character and density attracts pedestrian and bicycle use

Pervious pavement and native landscape plantings provide stormwater management

Source: Bloomington Planning Division, 2011.

through the BCS development before terminating at 34th Avenue. While this signature element focuses on the road, it also affects the abutting properties to the north and south.

Existing Conditions

The existing Lindau Lane extends between TH 77 (Cedar Avenue) on the west and 24th Avenue on the east. It provides an important access into the MOA and the South Loop District. MOA Phase 2 expansion will occur on the north side of Lindau Lane. Existing development along the proposed Lindau Link alignment include a hotel, small offices, manufacturing and assembly, the 28th Avenue LRT station and park & ride ramp, an electric substation, and vacant parcels.

Key Opportunities

Lindau Link presents the opportunity to establish a direct physical and visual link between the two anchor developments in South Loop.

Key opportunities include:

- Concentrating mixed-use development along Lindau Link will **create a more urban character and density** that attracts pedestrian and bicycle use.
- Establishing a concentration of restaurants, retail, and boutique hotels along Lindau Link can **create street-level activity linking the MOA and BCS**.
- **Creating a continuous east-west connection** through the heart of South Loop that will improve circulation and potentially serve as a corridor for a **district energy distribution system**.

- Redevelopment of adjacent parcels presents an opportunity to **create a finer-grained street grid with pedestrian-scaled blocks**.

- **Expanding transit access and circulation** through the District by establishing a route that directly connects the 28th Avenue LRT station and the MOA transit station, which is a hub for LRT, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), express and regular bus services.

- **Enhancing access to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR)** by extending Lindau Link east to 34th Avenue and designing 28th Avenue as the principle north-south “green street” through South Loop. Between 30th and 34th Avenues, Lindau Link will be designed to only accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

Features and Development Principles

Land Use and Building Design

A mix of office, retail and hotel uses envisioned along the Lindau Link. Retail and restaurants will provide activity at the sidewalk level. Hotels located along Lindau Link will provide additional activity in the evening after office hours.

Principles

- Encourage **mixed-use development with active ground floor uses and transparent storefronts** that provide a safe, comfortable, and interesting pedestrian environment.
- Encourage **sustainable building and low-impact design** techniques.



What is a “Complete Street?”

Complete Streets is not a prescriptive roadway design. Individual “complete” street designs vary based on context, including topography, road function, the speed of traffic, pedestrian and bicycle demand, local land use, and other factors. The City will implement Complete Streets in such a way that the character of the project area, the values of the community, and the needs of all users are fully considered. Therefore, Complete Streets will not look the same in all environments, neighborhoods, or development contexts, and will not necessarily include exclusive elements for all modes.

See **Section 3.3.2 Circulation Framework**, page 3.49.



Photo credit: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC.

Buildings define the street edge in Market Common, Arlington, Virginia.



Vertical mixed use with ground-floor retail invites pedestrian traffic.

- Use **buildings to define and enclose the streetscape**, creating a pedestrian-scaled environment.
- Ensure **building shadows** do not result in continuous shade at street level.
- Promote **shared parking strategies**.
- Provide flexible **on-street parking** to support ground floor businesses.
- Implement a **public bike-share program**.

Movement and Circulation

Lindau Link and major cross streets (e.g, 28th Avenue) will be designed to accommodate multiple modes of transportation and pedestrian activity. On-street parking will be available to accommodate ground floor retail and service uses. Longer-term parking will be concentrated in shared lots or structures located behind buildings with access from side streets.

Between 24th and 30th Avenues, Lindau Link will be developed as a multi-modal street that invites pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and transit, while providing stormwater management. East of 30th Avenue, it will become a bicycle and pedestrian path through BCS and connect to the MVNWR.

Principles

- Utilize **complete street design concepts** to ensure streets function for a variety of users – pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles, and transit – and provide streetscape **amenities that enhance the pedestrian experience and safety**.
- Locate **structured parking facilities** to be accessed from cross streets and to minimize their frontage along Lindau Link.

Parks and Open Space

Lindau Link will incorporate landscaping and green infrastructure features that will convey a park-like character through the heart of South Loop. This “greenway” will connect MOA, its western terminus, with BCS Park, and a new trailhead access into the MVNWR at its eastern terminus at 34th Avenue.

Plazas created around the intersection with 24th Avenue will use common materials and landscaping to visually and physically connect MOA with the east side of South Loop. Sculpture or public art in these plazas will be used to create a visual landmark to denote this important gateway node along 24th Avenue. This is discussed in more detail in the 24th Avenue Corridor signature element, *see Section 3.2.2, page 3.21*. Courtyards created along Lindau Link, can provide activity areas for office building and ground floor tenants.

Lindau Link will incorporate a variety of sustainable design features, such as LED lighting, pervious pavement, recycled materials, and native landscape plants. Infiltration features will be used to provide stormwater management, particularly in green spaces, such as the center median and the triangular open space north of the 28th Avenue LRT station.

Position Only
Figure 3.12

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Position Only
Figure 3.13

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Principles

- Incorporate **public plazas and visual elements** at key intersections (e.g., 24th Avenue, 28th Avenue) to **create identity**.
- Develop **multi-purpose utility corridors** to combine compatible utilities in a single conduit (e.g., water, sanitary sewer, and energy system distribution lines.)
- Enhance **connections to the MVNWR** by creating new trailheads, improving trail and roadway connections, and installing wayfinding signs.

Implementation Strategy and Phasing

Public investment priority will be given to support construction of Lindau Link from 24th Avenue to 30th Avenue as a means to leverage private development along Lindau Link. After 2030, the priority for public investment will focus on eastward extension of Lindau Link as a pedestrian and bicycle corridor between 30th and 34th Avenues.



Aerial view of 24th Avenue looks north at Lindau Lane.

3.2.2 24th Avenue Gateway Corridor

The 24th Avenue Corridor serves as a major gateway to South Loop that can convey a strong sense of arrival and identity. Streetscape improvements, a major redevelopment of the Mall of America (MOA) transit station, and new buildings along 24th Avenue will transform the appearance and function of this corridor. Trees and rain gardens will define and soften the street edge, add visual appeal and help manage stormwater using low-impact design (LID) infiltration techniques. See **Figure 3.14**, page 3.23, and **Figure 3.15**, page 3.24, for illustrations of the future development.

Location

The 24th Avenue Corridor extends between I-494 on the north and the intersection of Killebrew Drive and East Old Shakopee Road on the south.

Existing Conditions

The 24th Avenue Corridor is a high-volume arterial road that accommodates through traffic and vehicles entering and leaving South Loop businesses, particularly the MOA. It provides primary truck and transit access to the MOA and the MOA Transit Center. The MOA Transit Center is the terminus of the

Hiawatha LRT Line and the third busiest transit hub in the metro area.

Development along 24th Avenue currently consists of hotels, office-warehouses, the MOA and several large, undeveloped parcels. These parcels are future development sites (including MOA expansion) and most are currently used as overflow parking for MOA.

The corridor currently lacks visual cohesion and appeal due to the road width, vacant lots, minimal landscaping, and the visually imposing MOA parking ramp.



Wayfinding signage enhances the user experience.

These factors result in an uninviting pedestrian environment and lackluster streetscape character.

Key Opportunities

The 24th Avenue Corridor presents several opportunities to transform this major roadway into a visually distinctive gateway and transit corridor. Key opportunities include:

- Capitalizing on the high traffic volumes by **creating distinct gateways at major intersections** (e.g., American Boulevard, Lindau Lane, and Killebrew Drive/East Old Shakopee Road). Gateways incorporating **public art and/or wayfinding signs** will improve the appearance of the corridor, create identity, and improve circulation.
- Locating new buildings, trees and landscaping along the street edge will **enclose and create pedestrian-scale along the corridor**.
- Utilizing **infiltration features** along the street edge will **create value** for adjacent properties by filtering and **reducing stormwater runoff** and becoming an attractive **landscape feature**.
- Designing MOA Phase II to **improve the visual character of 24th Avenue and provide pedestrian and streetscape enhancements**.
- Utilizing excess southbound capacity projected on 24th Avenue to **optimize transit service, and improve access, visibility, and capacity of the MOA Transit Center**.

[See *Airport South District Plan – Traffic Analysis* memorandum dated July 29, 2009.]

- **Connecting to the regional trail system** via intercity and Nine Mile regional trails.

- **Improving access and visibility of the MOA Transit Center** will support increased transit use and improve accessibility to the rest of South Loop.

- **Adding transit center capacity** will help serve the increased transit ridership anticipated with future development in the District.

Features and Development Principles

Land Use and Building Design

New development will establish a building edge along both sides of 24th Avenue that will change the character of the corridor. MOA expansion, proposed to occupy a full block on the west side of 24th, will include a mix of retail, office, and additional lodging and entertainment venues.

Principles

- Provide **physical and visual links** between MOA and development on the east side of 24th Avenue.
- New buildings should provide street-level openings onto 24th Avenue to **improve pedestrian access and enliven the streetscape**.
- New buildings should be designed and located to **create a sense of enclosure and pedestrian scale** along 24th Avenue.

Movement and Circulation

As the primary gateway into South Loop, 24th Avenue will continue to carry a large amount of traffic and transit service. However,

identified excess road capacity can be used to accommodate MOA Transit Center renovation, improve car and bus operations, or create a planted median to improve traffic management and provide a refuge for pedestrian crossing.

Principles

- **Improve transit services and facilities**, including major renovation of the MOA Transit Center. The MOA Transit Center renovation should include:

- Enhanced **identification and wayfinding signage**.

- Creation of a **station “storefront”** that provides presence and visibility on 24th Avenue.

- **Bus pick-up and drop-off areas** along 24th Avenue in addition to those inside the parking ramp, that could improve bus rapid transit (BRT) service.

- **Improve the pedestrian experience** by providing expanded sidewalks with boulevard trees to provide buffers and pedestrian scale.

Figure 3.14 24th Avenue Corridor looking South from Lindau Link

Establish a coordinated streetscape of boulevard trees to visually unify 24th Avenue

Incorporate planted medians where space allows



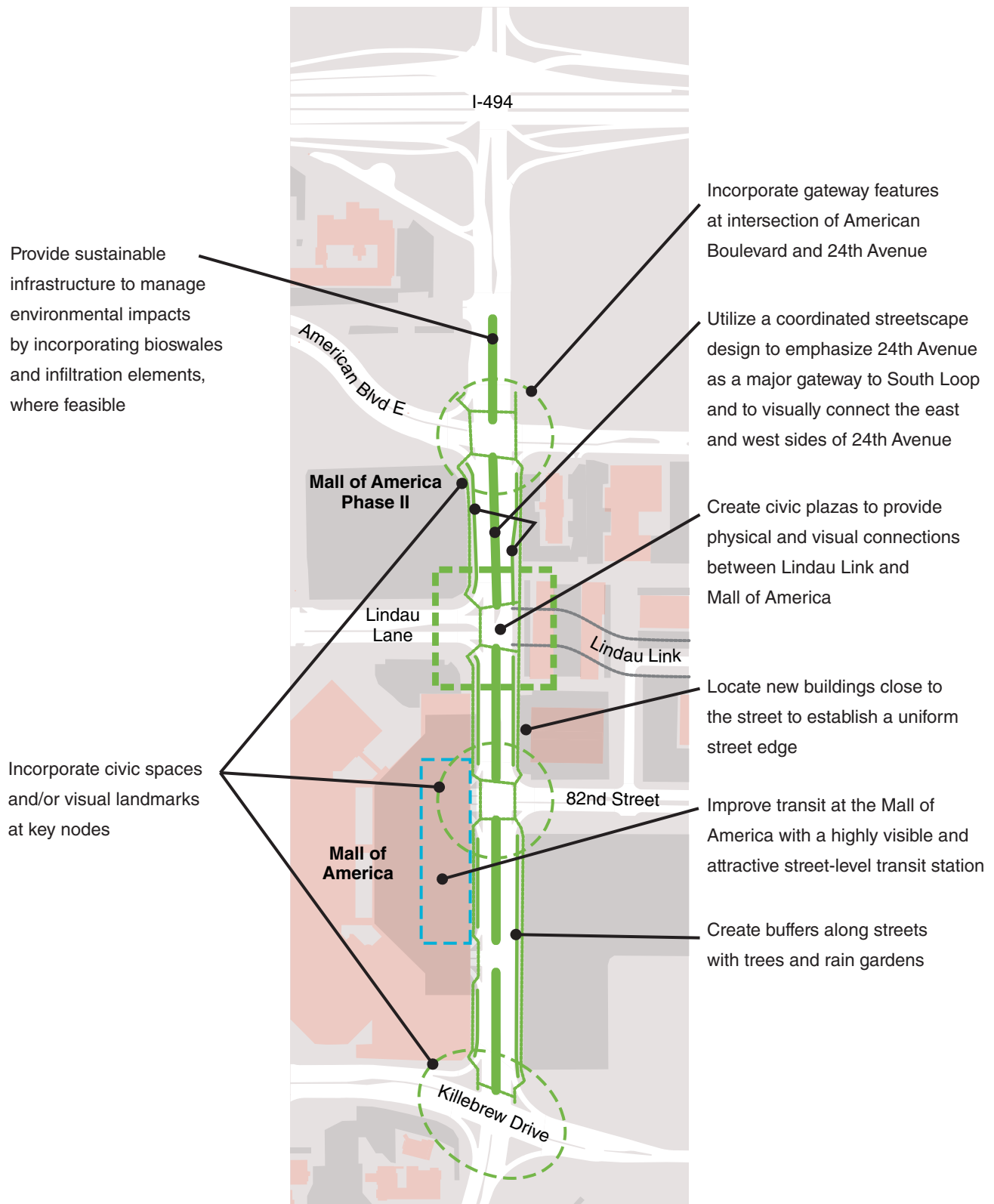
Incorporate civic spaces with visual landmarks to create gateway nodes and spaces for pedestrian activity

Incorporate elements such as infiltration basins and rain gardens to manage stormwater

Improve transit passenger experience at the Mall of America with a highly visible and attractive street-level transit station

Source: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC

Figure 3.15 24th Avenue Corridor: Gateway Concept, Plan View



Source: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC

Parks and Open Space

Public plazas, street trees and landscaping on both sides of 24th Avenue and a new, planted median can establish visual continuity, help decrease the scale of the roadway, and provide shade and buffering for pedestrians comfort. Where space is available, rain gardens along the edge of 24th Avenue can be used to collect stormwater runoff from the street as well as from the roofs of adjacent buildings. At Lindau Link, public plazas will be created to visually and physically connect Lindau Link with the entrance to MOA and accentuate the prominence of this intersection.

Principles

- **Create gateway features and public plazas** at key intersections. Gateways and plazas should include placemaking elements, such as wayfinding signs, public art, lighting, and landscaping.
- Establish a **coordinated streetscape design to visually connect** the east and west sides of 24th Avenue.
- Use street trees and boulevard plantings to **create buffers to increase pedestrian comfort**.
- Incorporate **sustainable infrastructure to manage stormwater** and improve the appearance of

public plazas and boulevards. This may include elements such as: **rain gardens, infiltration basins, pervious pavement, and high-efficiency lighting**.

Implementation Strategy and Phasing

Public investment will be focused on transit improvements along 24th Avenue. Highest priority will be given to developing a coordinated civic space around the intersection of 24th Avenue and Lindau Link. This will include new plazas that visually and physically connect MOA and Lindau Link.

Other key investment priorities include reconstruction of the MOA Transit Center incorporating a transit storefront and creating gateway nodes at key intersections along the corridor to enhance South Loop identity and wayfinding. Public investment will also be considered in conjunction with private development to implement streetscape amenities including sidewalks, street trees, and sustainable infrastructure.



Transit-oriented development (TOD)

TOD is moderate to higher-density development located within easy walking distance of a major transit stop. It generally includes a mix of residential, employment and shopping opportunities physically designed to enhance access by pedestrians and bicyclists without excluding the auto.

Source: Metropolitan Council Regional 2030 Transportation Policy Plan - Final, November 2010.

3.2.3 34th and American Neighborhood

The area around the intersection of 34th Avenue and American Boulevard is envisioned as a new mixed-use neighborhood with up to 3,500 multi-family dwellings located to take advantage of the Hiawatha light rail transit (LRT) and proximity to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR). Use of transit-oriented development (TOD) principles makes this a distinctive neighborhood in the region. *See Figure 3.16, page 3.27, and Figure 3.17, page 3.29, for illustrations of the future development.*

Location

The 34th and American neighborhood is centered on the American Boulevard LRT Station at the intersection of 34th Avenue and American Boulevard. The Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (MSP) is located across I-494 just north of the neighborhood.

Existing Conditions

Development in the area currently consists of hotels, office buildings, and off-site airport parking lots. This neighborhood serves as a gateway to South Loop and Bloomington for people arriving by transit or car via 34th Avenue.

The American Boulevard LRT Station is a split station design with platforms located north and south of American Boulevard. This is one of four LRT stations located in South Loop. The Hiawatha LRT provides the neighborhood quick and convenient access to the airport and downtown Minneapolis.

Portions of the South Loop District are within MSP runway safety zones where residential land uses are not allowed. However, residential development is permitted in this area of the District, where the noise exposure is below 70 decibels. The Reflections condominiums, in the

adjacent Bloomington Central Station (BCS), provide a glimpse of the character envisioned for this transit-oriented neighborhood. Approved BCS plans include an additional 800 dwellings located just southwest of the American Boulevard LRT station.

The MVNWR forms the south and east edge of the neighborhood and is owned and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). An existing multi-purpose trail along I-494 enters South Loop near the MVNWR Headquarters. This trails serves both bicycle commuters and recreational users, providing connections to trails in Dakota County and to trails extending west through Bloomington.

Key Opportunities

The 34th and American Neighborhood possesses unique amenities for establishing a mixed-use residential neighborhood centered on the American Boulevard LRT station. Key opportunities include:

- Proximity to I-494 and MSP make South Loop a **highly desirable location for businesses** seeking convenient access to the region, and national and international markets.

Position Only
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Figure 17

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- Direct access to the Hiawatha LRT line provides **connections to the Mall of America (MOA), MSP, the University of Minnesota, and downtown Minneapolis.**
- South Loop is also well served by bus routes, including **proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service** to Minneapolis, Eden Prairie, and Dakota County. *See Section 3.3.2, page 3.54, for more information on transit service.*
- Interim land uses (e.g., remote airport parking), currently occupy about two-thirds (24.6 acres) of the developable land in this area. This amount of under-developed land immediately adjacent to an LRT station presents an **excellent opportunity for new, TOD development.**
- Proximity to the vast open space and natural assets of the MVNWR gives this neighborhood tremendous appeal. The MVNWR Headquarters and Visitors Center, located along the neighborhood's eastern boundary, provides **access to an extensive system of trails and nature-based recreation and education programs.**

Features and Development Principles

Land Use and Building Design

The neighborhood's organizing principle is transit-oriented development (TOD). Providing an integrated mix of housing, convenience retail, and employment at densities that support transit service will encourage both day and evening activity and create a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood.

In mixed-use development, shared parking becomes a viable and attractive option. Locating parking structures adjacent to I-494 can help buffer residential uses from roadway noise.

Around the American Boulevard LRT station, new office and convenience retail complement the existing hotel on the southeast corner and future BCS residential buildings on the southwest corner. Buildings will be designed to frame new plazas at the corners of the intersection, creating a defined public space centered on the LRT station. In the northwest and northeast quadrants, a variety of housing types will frame new local streets and parks. Taller residential buildings will be located to capture views into the river valley and the MVNWR.

Principles

- Promote TOD concepts that provide **a range of housing types, convenience service and retail uses, and work places.**
- Site layout and building massing should result in **compact development that incorporates sustainable design features**, such as passive solar, day lighting, and sun shading.
- **Encourage shared parking** and locate parking structures to buffer residential uses from I-494.

Movement and Circulation

The American Boulevard LRT Station is the central focus of this neighborhood. Ensuring safe and convenient pedestrian access to the LRT station is complicated by





its split-station design and the substantial amount of traffic on American Boulevard and 34th Avenue. Pedestrian crossings must be carefully designed and maintained to enhance safety and pedestrian comfort. The feasibility of constructing a pedestrian bridge crossing over 34th Avenue will be evaluated relative to new development in the northeast and northwest quadrants.

New residential development will be served by a network of new streets and sidewalks. This network will support local vehicular traffic and allow people to visit neighbors, run errands, go shopping, or go to work on foot, bike, or transit.

South Loop is directly connected to MSP via 34th Avenue, which also provides airport access from the regional highway system. Improvements to the intersection of 34th Avenue and I-494 are planned that will improve traffic flow and accommodate physical changes to the airport proposed in the *MSP 2030 Conceptual Plan*. Improvements to the interchange and 34th Avenue will need to be coordinated with other road improvements proposed for this area.

Principles

- Establish the **American Boulevard LRT station as a neighborhood focal point**.
- Provide **safe and direct pedestrian routes** to the LRT station and throughout the neighborhood.
- Establish a **fine-grained street network** that supports multiple modes of transportation, maximizes

circulation flexibility, and enhances neighborhood livability and placemaking.

Parks and Open Space

New residential development will be oriented around parks and playgrounds linked by pedestrian and bicycle trails. Parks will serve as placemaking elements, lending aesthetic appeal and value to adjacent properties. Active parks, with playgrounds, can become local gathering places and focal points for neighborhood recreation. Other open spaces may consist of public or private plazas and landscaped areas.

New public plazas at the intersection of 34th Avenue and American Boulevard will function as a gateway to South Loop and create a focal point around the American Boulevard LRT station. Pedestrian paths will connect the LRT station to parks in the southwest, northwest, and northeast quadrants.

All streets are lined with trees for aesthetic appeal, to provide shade, and create a sense of pedestrian scale. Where possible, boulevards and open spaces will include infiltration features such as rain gardens and pervious pavement that can filter and reduce stormwater runoff. The segment of American Boulevard east of 34th Avenue will include additional landscaping and trail improvements to highlight its function as the primary entrance to the MVNWR Headquarters.

Principles

- Create a **network of urban parks and plazas** connected by well-

landscaped streets, sidewalks, and trails.

- **Integrate parks and pathways with new development** to create amenities, increase value, and maximize pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- Create an **attractive access to the MVNWR Headquarters and Interpretation Center facility**.

Implementation Strategy and Phasing

Early public investment priorities will focus on creating gateway plazas around the intersection of 34th

Avenue and American Boulevard. These will be framed by new office, retail, and residential development and will be implemented when new development occurs. Public investment in new streets, parks and trails will be timed to coordinate with and foster private redevelopment in this area. To minimize disruptions to traffic flow, public improvements affecting 34th Avenue will be coordinated with proposed improvements to the intersection of 34th Avenue and I-494, which are planned to occur before 2020.

3.2.4 Bluff Edge

The Bluff Edge embodies the natural character that lends unique appeal to South Loop. It encompasses the transition zone between the developed urban upland areas of South Loop and the natural open space and conservation resources of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR). Balancing resource and habitat protection with new development on sites adjacent to the bluff will be a primary challenge. A cooperative working partnership between the City and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services is essential to preserve and manage the natural beauty and rich ecosystem of the MVNWR.

Location

The Bluff Edge follows the entire east/southeastern edge of South Loop generally surrounding the 800-foot elevation contour and interfaces with the MVNWR, a unique natural resource for South Loop, Bloomington, and the Region.

Existing Conditions

The Bluff Edge encompasses three distinct areas: the urban upland area, the steeply sloped and forested bluffs, and the Minnesota River floodplain. These three areas support a wide variety of vegetation and

diverse habitats, with high ecological and natural resource value.

Much of the urban upland and forested bluff is in private ownership. The upland areas (above the 800-foot contour) support moderate to high intensity office, retail, and residential development. Areas at or below the 800-foot elevation are within the Bluff Protection (BP) Overlay Zoning District. The *Bluff Report District Plan*, adopted in 1982, led to the creation of the BP Overlay zones and design guidelines for development in those environmentally sensitive areas.





Two projects that have established a standard for bluff edge development are the Ceridian office building, above, and Cypress Semiconductor.

The floodplain is public property; most of the floodplain in South Loop is in the Long Meadow Lake Unit of the MVNWR. The MVNWR boundary generally follows the 722-foot contour. These bottomlands include flood plain forest, wetland complexes, and the Minnesota River.

Key Opportunities

The Bluff Edge encompasses the transition zone between the upland urban development areas in South Loop and sensitive natural areas and ravines along the bluff edge. Protecting natural resources and incorporating sustainable features into new development are fundamental principles of this plan that are particularly relevant in this area. Key opportunities include:

- New development on sites adjacent to the bluff can **benefit from the natural character of the MVNWR and river valley views**.
- **Establish a north-south pedestrian/bicycle route** along 28th Avenue through South Loop, connecting to the key east-west route along Lindau Link.
- **Improve the appearance and identity of the entrance to the MVNWR Visitors Center.**
- **Incorporate green infrastructure (e.g., infiltration) and native landscaping along streets** to help draw natural aspects of the MVNWR and bluff edge environment into the developed upland portions of South Loop.
- **Increasing awareness of and access to the MVNWR and available**

recreational opportunities can help brand the South Loop as a place with tremendous scenic and recreational amenities.

Features and Development Principles

Land Use and Building Design

There are three prime sites for new development adjacent to the bluff. These include: Spruce Shadows Farm and the adjacent Forest Glen parcels, Long Meadow Circle, and near Appletree Square, shown in pink on **Figure 3.18, page 3.35**. New development must be sensitive to the natural features and resource base unique to sites along or near the bluff (i.e., steep ravines, slope erosion, soil compaction, seeps, etc.). Low impact development (LID) techniques that mimic natural processes will be used to manage stormwater runoff, minimize disruption to natural site features, and foster energy efficiency.

Principles

- **Utilize sustainable site design practices**, such as infiltration and pervious pavement, to manage stormwater.
- **Limit and mitigate bluff encroachments** to preserve the urban-natural edge along the bluff as a natural resource transition zone.
- Orient buildings to **maximize solar access and day-lighting**.
- **Foster compact development.**
- **Utilize native landscape plants.**

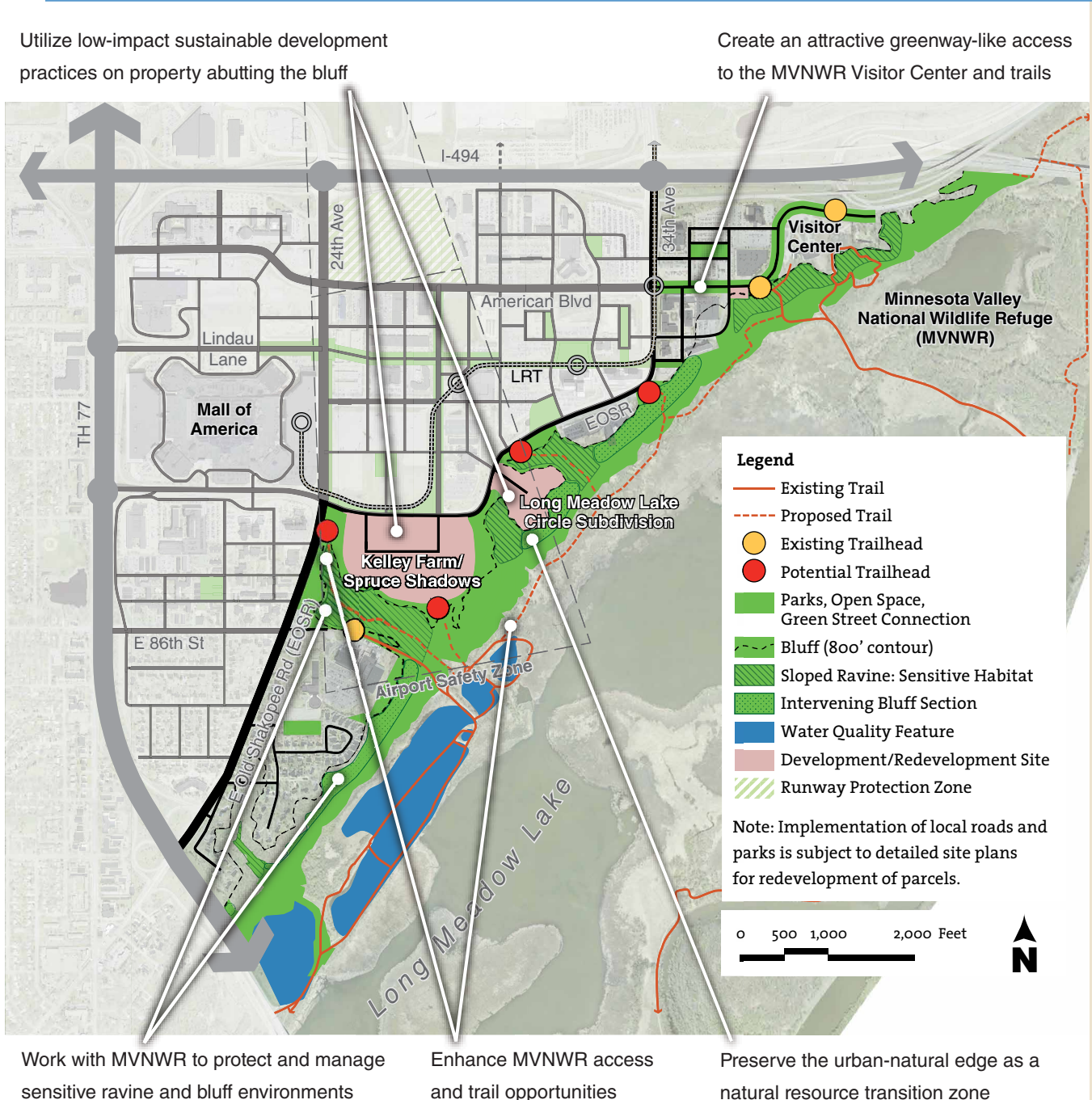
Movement and Circulation

Additional landscaping and pedestrian and bicycle amenities along American Boulevard, east of 34th Avenue, will create a greenway-like character to enhance the entrance to the MVNWR

Headquarters and Visitors Center.

Pedestrian and bicycle amenities will also be provided along 28th Avenue to create an attractive connection to the MVNWR at a proposed new trailhead near the bluff top. The location of this new trailhead will

Figure 3.18 Bluff Edge Concept



Source: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC, 2011



be determined in conjunction with development of the Kelley Farm/Spruce Shadows property. The alignment of the new trail into the MVNWR will be determined in cooperation with the Refuge staff.

Principles

- **Establish a network of pedestrian paths and sidewalks** connecting the developed upland area of South Loop with the MVNWR.
- **Provide an attractive access to the MVNWR Headquarters and Interpretation Center facility.**

Parks and Open Space

Public parks and open space along the bluff provide a continuous natural corridor consisting of habitats and ecosystems from hillside forest to wet meadows. Much of this is located within the MVNWR. Increasing awareness and access to the MVNWR is an important objective of this plan so residents, hotel guests, and office workers can enjoy the recreation opportunities provided by the MVNWR.

Four new trailheads are proposed to increase access to the MVNWR, see **Figure 3.18**, page 3.35. New trails will connect the trailheads to the MVNWR trail system. Trailhead facilities and connecting trail design and alignment will be coordinated with the USFWS. Trails will incorporate sustainable design techniques to ensure they do not impact sensitive natural resources.

The City will work with the USFWS to coordinate trail connections between the new trailheads and proposed trails in the MVNWR. These include a proposed trail connecting the MVNWR

Headquarters and Visitors Center to the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge and the proposed Minnesota Valley State Trail. Specific alignments have not been determined for either trail at this time. The MVNWR trail, as noted in the *Minnesota Valley Comprehensive Conservation Plan (2004)*, is proposed along the bottom of the bluff while the State Trail is planned to follow the main channel of the Minnesota River located east and south of Long Meadow Lake.

A new park and trailhead will be created southeast of the intersection of 24th Avenue and East Old Shakopee Road/Killebrew Drive.

The park is envisioned as a dog park, with limited picnic facilities and a small parking lot. The park abuts Forest Glen Park and the new pedestrian trail through the ravine will provide access to the MVNWR.

Principles

- **Increase MVNWR access and complete trail connections.**
- **Design trails to minimize impacts on natural resources.**
- **Design new trailheads to coordinate with MVNWR trailheads.**
- **Preserve and protect cultural and historic assets.**

Implementation Strategy and Phasing

Initial public investment priorities will focus on development of new trailheads to improve access to the MVNWR and creation of a new public park southeast of the corner of 24th Ave South and East Old Shakopee Road, adjacent to Forest Glen Park. The City will continue to work cooperatively with the USFWS to protect and manage natural resources adjacent to the MVNWR.



Section 3

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3.3 Framework Components

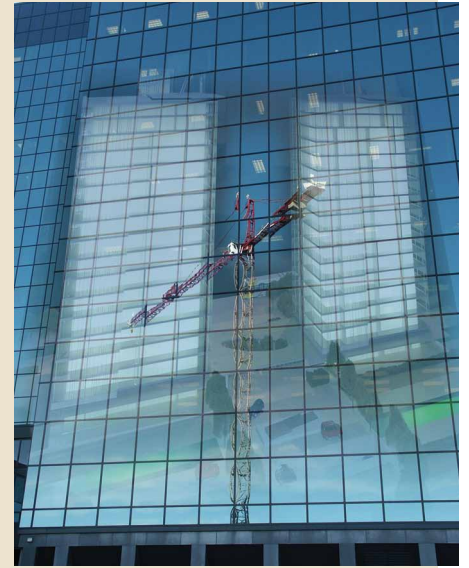
The Framework Components establish the foundation to guide new development and redevelopment in South Loop District. The four framework components describe the primary elements affecting physical development of the District. These include: land use; circulation and movement; parks and open space; and utilities. Together, these components describe a development vision that embraces the following principles:

- Development ideas must be **forward looking**, but also grounded by sound analysis of past and emerging trends.
- The planning horizon is the year 2050. A **long-term time frame** is crucial. Opportunities will occur during the next 20 to 40 years that do not seem practical based on today's market demand.
- Market demand, investment and technology are **variables that can speed up or slow down**, resulting in modifications to predicted development pace and concepts.
- The District Plan should be **considered in the larger context** of growth in the I-494 corridor, expansion of Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP), continuing improvements in regional transit service, and evolving demand for high-density housing options.

Section 3.3.1: Land Use Framework

South Loop is envisioned to become a distinct, sustainable urban neighborhood where employment-intensive office, retail, and hospitality uses are integrated with new residential development. Given its convenient access to MSP, major highways and excellent public transit systems, South Loop has potential to become a center for local, regional, and national commerce. Proximity to extensive natural open space in the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR) lends unique character and easy access to a wide range of recreation opportunities. By building on these assets, South Loop can fully realize the concept of live/work/play.

The South Loop District encompasses about 2,350 acres and is comprised of a mix of urban development and natural, open space areas. The largest



South Loop has the potential to become a center for local, regional and national commerce.



Hiawatha Light Rail Transit line connects four stations in the District, providing tremendous opportunity for Transit-Oriented Development.



Directly north of the District, the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport reaches global markets.



The Mall of America is the primary retail and entertainment anchor of the South Loop District.

single land use consists of conservation/open space areas, with approximately 62 percent (1,460 acres) of the District encompassing the bluffs, ravines, and floodplain along the Minnesota River. Much of the conservation area is located within the MVNWR and cannot be developed. The remaining 36 percent (approximately 890 acres) supports retail, office, hotel and residential development in the upland area above the bluff. Of the developable area north of 86th Street, about 224 acres are currently undeveloped or under-developed.

Development Character and Influences

A primary goal is to transform South Loop from its existing suburban character – consisting of large blocks containing single-use buildings surrounded by surface parking lots – to a more urban character and compact development pattern that supports a mix of uses, higher densities, and pedestrian-friendly streets.

Several existing uses within or immediately adjacent to South Loop have influenced its existing character and development pattern. These uses, described below and shown on **Figure 3.19, page 3.39**, will continue to influence future development in South Loop.

Hiawatha Light Rail Transit (LRT)

South Loop is served by the Hiawatha LRT line. With four LRT stations, South Loop has tremendous opportunity to become a model for compact Transit-Oriented

Development (TOD). The area around the American Boulevard LRT station is particularly well positioned for TOD as it transforms into a new, mixed-use, residential neighborhood. The Hiawatha LRT line provides direct and convenient access to MSP, the Veterans Administration hospital, and downtown Minneapolis. It also connects to other regional transit systems including Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Central Corridor LRT, and the Northstar Commuter Rail line. Exceptional connectivity to the region, as well as national and international locations, gives South Loop a real competitive advantage as a place to work, do business, recreate, and live.

Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport

South Loop enjoys quick and convenient access to MSP. This proximity presents many advantages for businesses, employees, and residents. As the economy becomes increasingly global, easy access to MSP will become a key benefit for people engaged in work or lifestyles that involve frequent air travel. Likewise, businesses that rely on air transport or that routinely interact with national or international offices can benefit from convenient airport access. The airport also presents some challenges for development, such as height and use limitations and aircraft noise.

Mall of America (MOA)

The MOA is a major retail and entertainment destination, drawing visitors from the region and

beyond. It is the primary retail and entertainment anchor of South Loop, providing a variety of dining, shopping, and entertainment opportunities to visitors, as well as residents and employees.

The MOA was intentionally designed to be inward focused; which is extremely effective for a stand-alone, multi-tenant retail/entertainment facility. However, it results in the MOA turning its back to the rest of the District. As development occurs to the east, it will be important to better integrate the MOA, physically and visually, with surrounding properties. This might involve creating a street front presence for the MOA Transit Station on 24th Avenue and designing future phases of MOA to be more outward focused.

Visual integration can be improved through coordinated streetscape treatment including distinctive gateway nodes that will visually

connect the east and west sides of 24th Avenue. These ideas are discussed in greater detail in the 24th Avenue signature element. See **Section 3.2, page 3.21.**

Bloomington Central Station (BCS)

Approved in 2005, the BCS master plan proposes a mix of office, hotel, and residential uses centered around an existing two-acre park and LRT station. Plans call for a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use neighborhood incorporating state-of-the-art sustainable practices and sound abatement. Completing the BCS master plan and extending its development pattern and design character throughout South Loop is a key objective of this Plan.

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR)

With its entire eastern edge formed by the MVNWR, South Loop enjoys

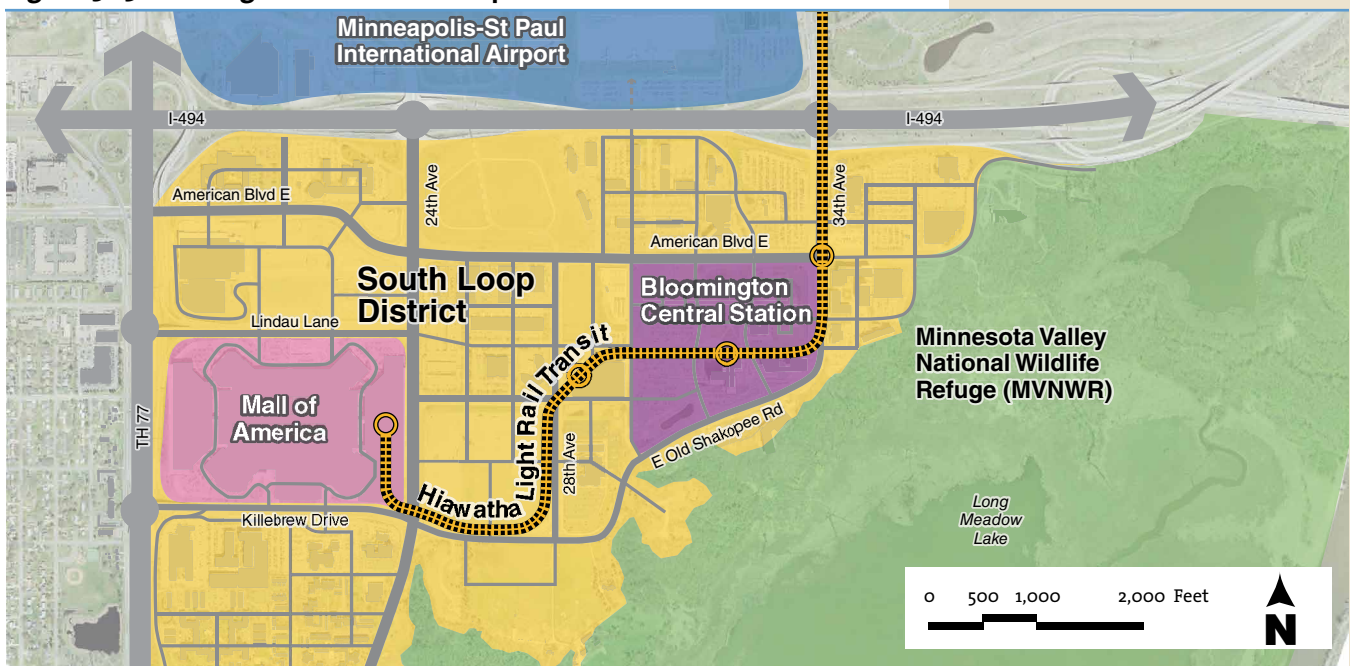


The Bloomington Central Station master plan provides an important model and catalyst for Transit-Oriented Development in South Loop.



The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge forms the southern and eastern edge of the District.

Figure 3.19 Existing Influential Development Features



Source: City of Bloomington, MN.

direct access to a significant natural amenity and extensive trail system. Several existing and proposed trailheads provide opportunities throughout South Loop to enter and enjoy the MVNWR. These ideas are discussed further in the Bluff District signature element. See **Section 3.2**, page 3.33.

Sustainable Development

To realize the development vision for South Loop, specific regulatory tools can be used to foster sustainable development and achieve the desired urban character, density, and form. Two new zoning districts are proposed to reflect the new land use categories described later in this section. The new districts will allow greater flexibility to foster the desired mix of land uses. Development standards will allow for higher densities and intensity of development while encouraging low-impact site design, energy conservation and high-quality urban design.

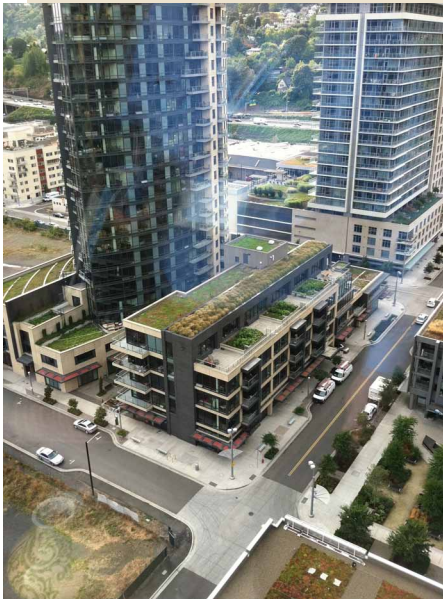
Use of sustainable, low-impact development techniques is particularly critical in locations adjacent to the bluff and steep, wooded ravines. This edge transition zone provides a range of habitats and supports a great diversity of species. It is important to preserve the ecological function of this area and protect it from development encroachment. Some protections already exist in the *Bluff Report District Plan* (December 1982) and

the Bluff Protection Overlay Zoning Districts (BP-1 and BP-2).

Development Phasing and Investment Priorities

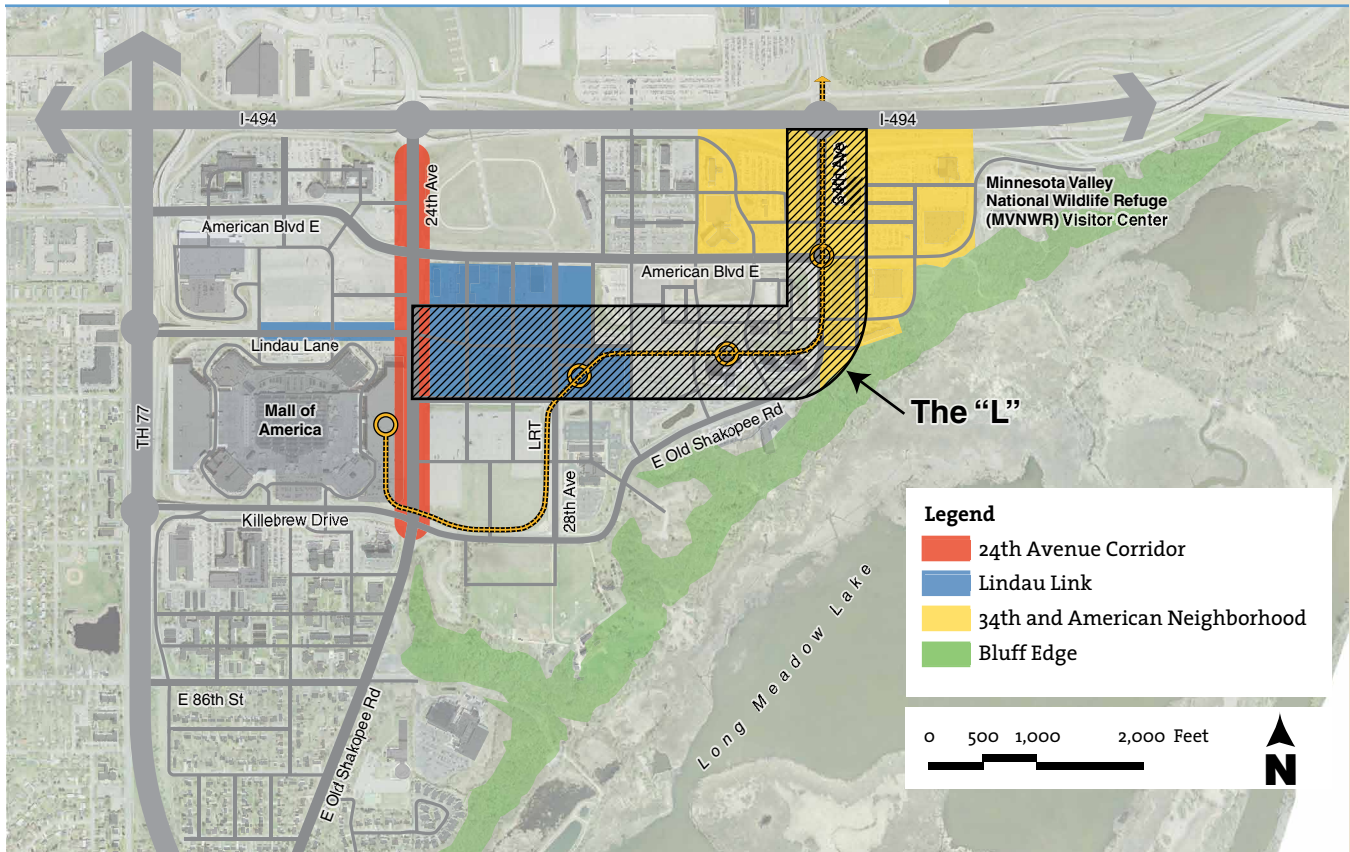
In preparing development projections, historical development trends in Bloomington were reviewed to gauge whether development forecasts for South Loop are reasonably achievable. While the amount of projected new development (over 10 million square feet) is ambitious, it is fairly consistent with what has occurred in the past. However, the economic downturn and market shifts at the regional, national and global scales, will likely lengthen the time needed for South Loop to reach full development. Accordingly, development projections were extended beyond the 20-year horizon typical of a long-range plan, with full development of South Loop not anticipated until about 2050.

Development projections were allocated into two development phases: mid-term (2030) and full development (2050). Through 2030 the City will focus public infrastructure investments, subsidies, and use of tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to incentivize development within the L-shaped area encompassing Lindau Link and the quadrants around the American Boulevard LRT station. See **Figure 3.20**, page 3.41. Priority will be given to new development that



Landscaped “green” roofs and pervious pavers can significantly reduce the amount of stormwater run off from a development site.

Figure 3.20 The “L” and Signature Elements



Source: City of Bloomington, Minnesota.

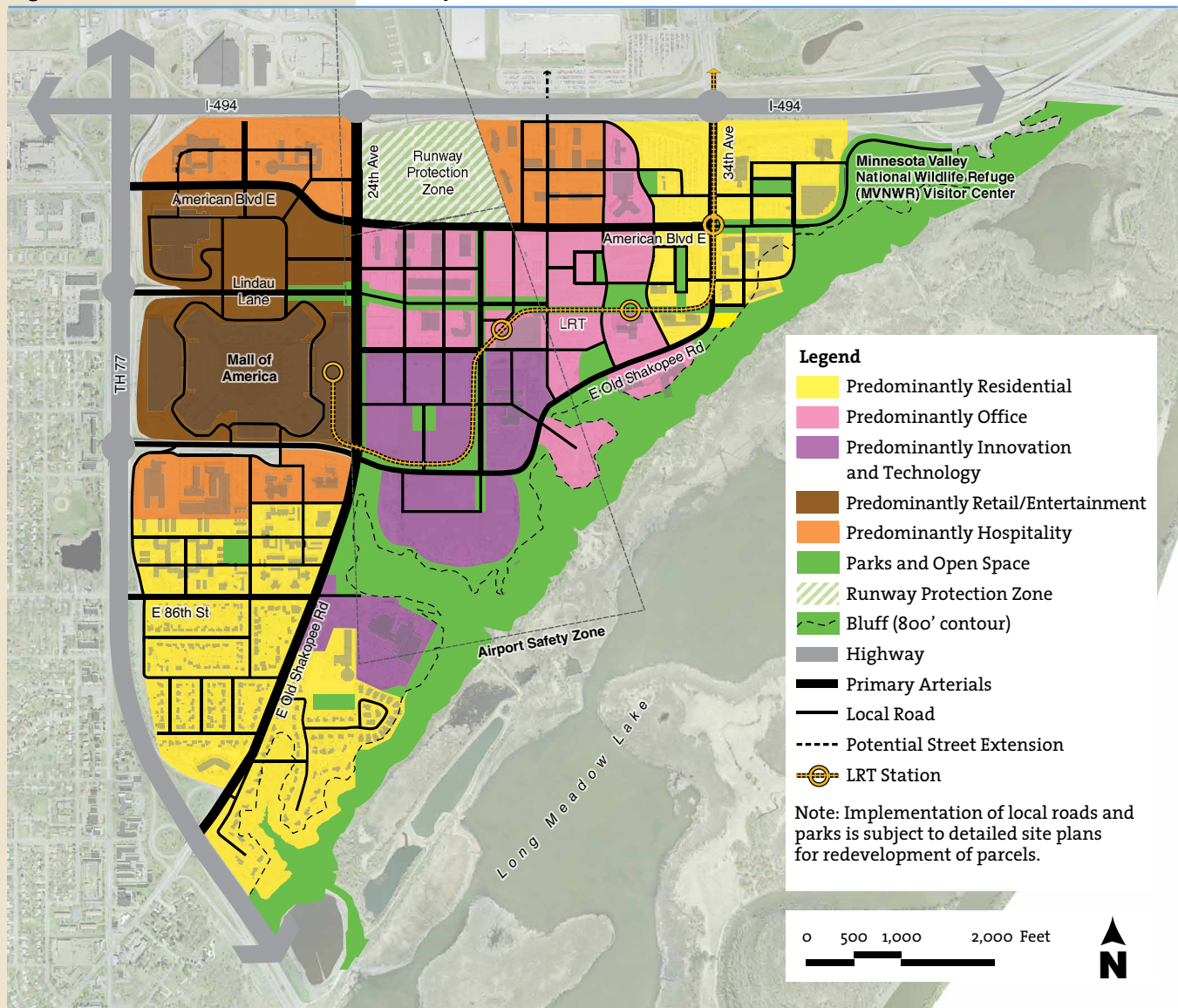
complements and leverages existing private development investments (particularly, MOA and BCS) and public transit investments.

Of course, development in other areas of South Loop will proceed during the first phase (2030) and through 2050. Beyond the “L”, public investments will be directed at strategic implementation of key elements described in the Signature Elements. *See Section 3.2, page 3.13.*

District-wide public investment priorities include:

- Establishing a fine-grained network of streets;
- Creating a system of parks and open spaces connected by trails and “green streets”;
- Enhancing access to the MVNWR; and
- Increasing energy efficiency and sustainability.

Figure 3.21 Land Use Framework Concept



Source: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC.

Land Use Designations

The South Loop Land Use Framework, shown in **Figure 3.21**, above, includes seven (7) land use designation categories. These categories are intentionally broad in scope. To establish South Loop as a true mixed use district, each land use category allows for a variety of uses, but focuses on the predominant use indicated by the category name. Specific use provisions (and restrictions) are described in and

governed by the *Bloomington Zoning Code*. Development will also need to abide by the design and sustainability guidelines outlined in the *South Loop Design Guidelines*.

The major land use categories in the South Loop Land Use Framework are described below:

Residential: This designation applies to areas where residential uses will be predominant. A variety of residential densities and typologies

is encouraged. Mid- and high-rise residential development are favored north of 86th Street where more intensive development, traffic, and airport noise impacts are greatest. The area between Killebrew Drive and 86th Street is envisioned to redevelop and potentially become denser, but maintain its existing mix of multi-family, office and hospitality uses. The area south of 86th Street will be maintained as a single-family neighborhood.

Office: This designation applies to areas where professional and business offices will be the predominant land use. Ground floor retail uses, convenience retail, restaurants, and commercial services are encouraged to complement office uses. Hospitality uses are a compatible secondary land use. High-tech uses may also be allowed as a secondary use, although buffering may be required to minimize visual and noise impacts on adjacent properties.

Hospitality: This designation applies to areas where hotels and related uses (e.g. conference or meeting facilities, banquet facilities, etc.) will be the predominant land use. Ground floor retail and restaurants are encouraged. Office is a suitable secondary use. Residential uses are generally discouraged, and in some locations not permitted due to land use restrictions in the airport runway zones.

Retail/Entertainment: This designation is focused on the MOA (existing and future phases). The predominant land uses in this area are retail and entertainment.

Hospitality uses, in support of the MOA and other retail and entertainment venues, are also encouraged. Office and multi-family residential development may be appropriate secondary land uses, if integrated with the MOA.

Innovation and Technology: This designation provides for flexible, high-tech fabrication and research-oriented uses that may include integrated office uses. Pure office uses, commercial services, and restaurants are also allowed. Residential uses are not allowed, although may be appropriate on adjacent properties if adequate buffering is provided.

Parks and Open Space: This designation applies to areas designed as parks, open space or natural, conservation areas. Whether publicly or privately owned, these areas are intended for public use, unless access is specifically restricted due to sensitive natural resource characteristics. Development in these areas is limited to public, institutional, or accessory service facilities related to park, open space, and conservation uses.

Runway Protection Zone (RPZ): The runway protection zone extends immediately south of Runway 17-35 to American Boulevard. The land is owned by the Metropolitan Airports Commission and is subject to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations that require the area be maintained free of trees and structures, except FAA instruments and runway lighting.



South Loop is home to a number of hotel and hospitality uses.



HealthPartners, a Minnesota-based not-for-profit HMO, is headquartered in South Loop.

Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

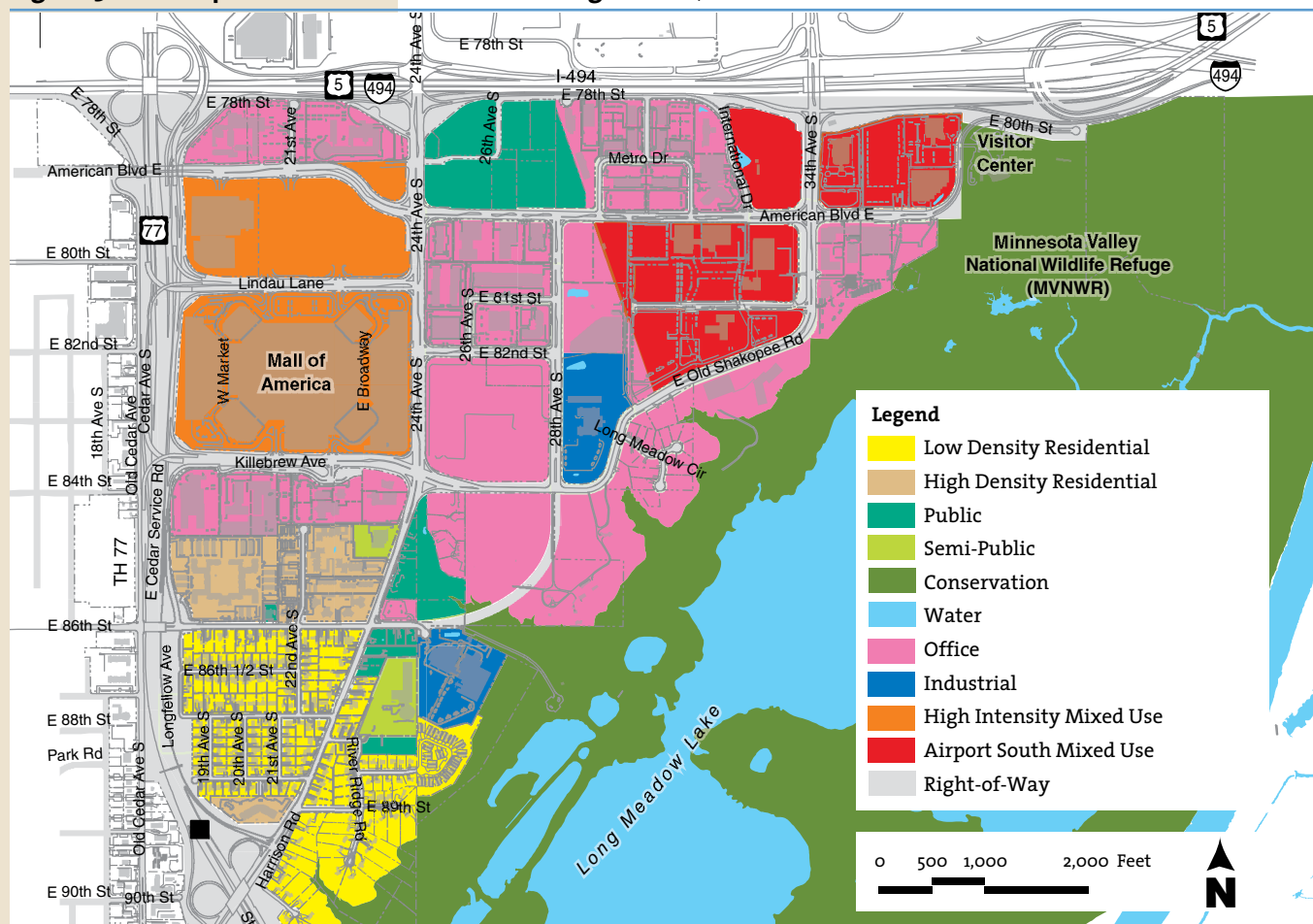
The *City of Bloomington, MN Comprehensive Plan 2008* contains fifteen distinct land use categories. Of those, eleven are represented in the South Loop District. See **Figure 3.22, below**. The categories in the South Loop Plan Land Use Framework are intentionally generalized to convey the envisioned mixed use development concept.

The City's official land use designations will continue to be those defined by the *City of Bloomington, MN, Comprehensive Plan*. Few amendments are needed to align the land use designations

proposed in the South Loop Plan Land Use Framework with the City's *Comprehensive Plan*. The most significant change will be the creation and application of two new land use categories:

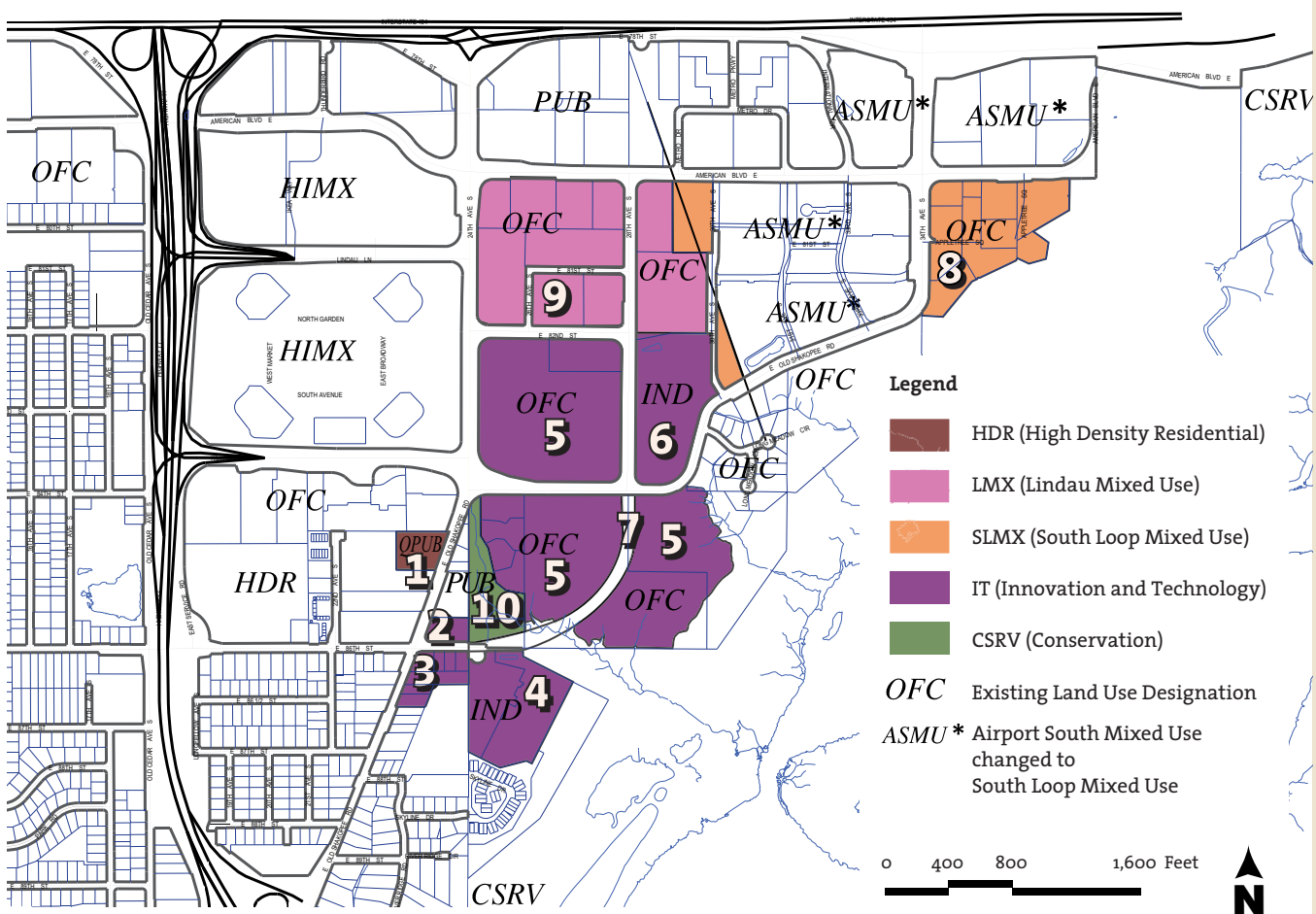
- **Innovation and Technology (IT)** category will accommodate a flexible mix of high-tech manufacturing, research and development, and pure office uses. It will also allow hotels and supportive retail and service uses.
- **Lindau Mixed Use (LMX)** category will provide for a more dense mix of office, hotel, retail and service uses (e.g., coffee shops, restaurants, groceries, pharmacies, dry cleaners) along Lindau Link.

Figure 3.22 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations, 2008



Source: Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2008.

Figure 3.23 Proposed Land Use Amendments



Source: Bloomington Planning Division, 2012.

Parcels proposed for land use amendments are highlighted on **Figure 3.23**, above, and include:

1. Change the designation from Quasi-Public (QPUB) to High Density Residential (HDR) on the parcel at 2350 East Old Shakopee Road. (Qwest switching station).
2. Change the designation from Office (OFC) to Innovation and Technology (IT) on the parcel at 2300 E. 86th Street, future Cypress expansion.
3. Change the designation from Public (PUB) to Innovation and Technology (IT) on the parcels at 2275, 2271, 2263, and 2255 E. Old Shakopee Road, and 2305, 2313, and 2325 E. 86th Street (future Cypress expansion).
4. Change the designation from Industrial (IND) to Innovation and Technology (IT) on the parcels at 2401 and 2411 E. 86th Street (Cypress).
5. Change the designation from Office (OFC) to Innovation and Technology (IT) on two parcels at 8200 28th Avenue S. and 8201 24th Avenue S. (aka the “Adjoining Lands”) and six parcels south of E. Old Shakopee Road (Spruce Shadows Farm and former apartment site).
6. Change the designation from Industrial (IND) to Innovation and Technology (IT) on the parcel at 2800 E. Old Shakopee Road (Polar Semiconductor).
7. Change the designation from Right-of-Way (ROW) to Innovation and Technology (IT) and Conservation (CSRV) to remove the proposed 86th Street extension.
8. Change the designation from Office (OFC) to South Loop Mixed Use (SLMX) on eleven parcels southeast of American Boulevard E. and 34th Avenue S. (Appletree Square area), and portions of the parcels at 8170 34th Avenue S. and 2401 American Boulevard E.
9. Change the designation from Office (OFC) to Lindau Mixed Use (LMX) on 10 parcels located north and south of the proposed Lindau Link alignment.
10. Change the designation from Public (PUB) to Conservancy (CSRV) on two parcels located adjacent to the ravine east of E. Old Shakopee Road.

Relationship Between Land Use and Zoning Designations

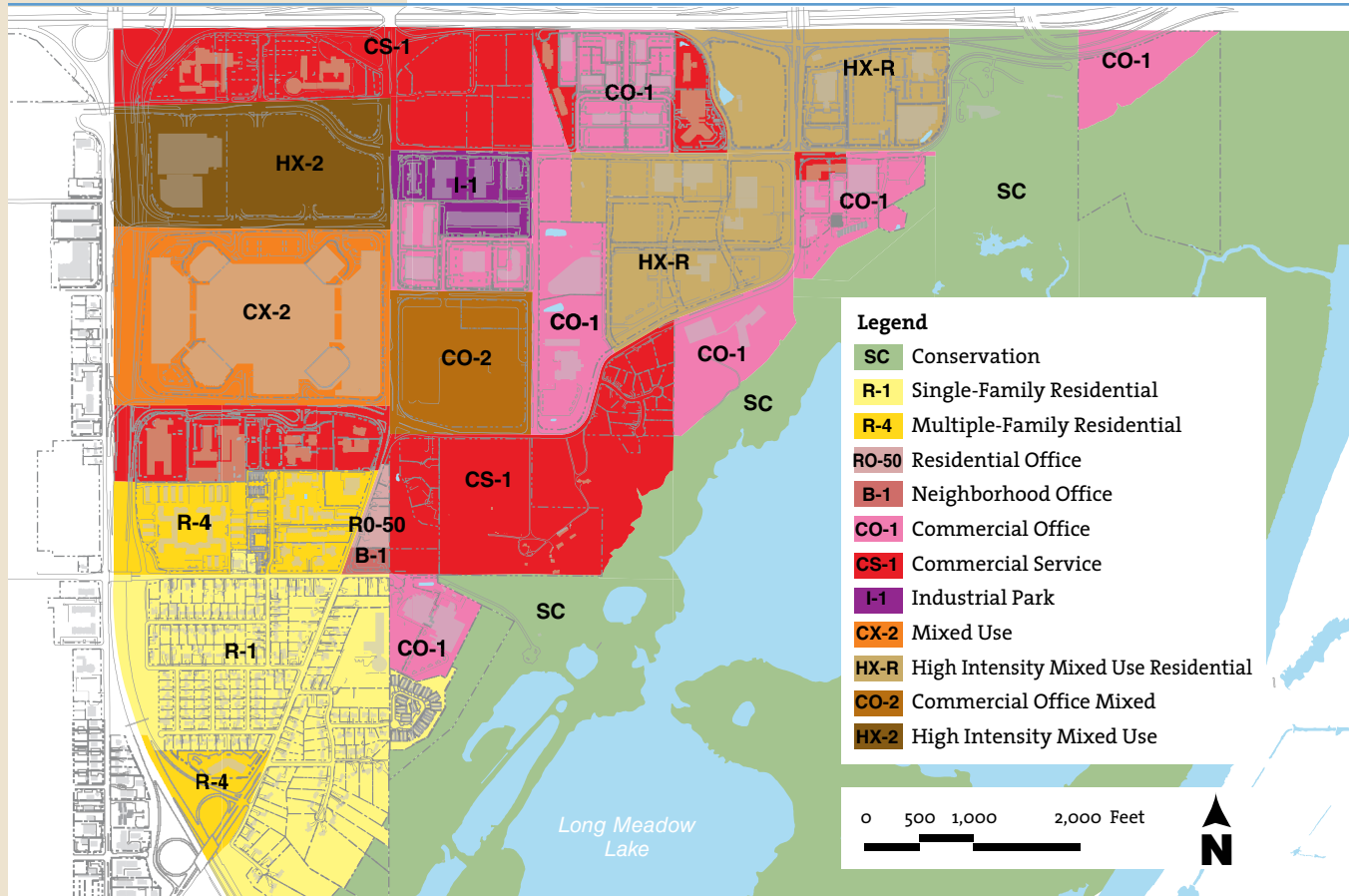
Zoning districts outline specific development regulations and are used in conjunction with land use designations to implement the City's development vision. Whereas land use designations are broad in focus and are intended to establish the basis of the development vision, zoning districts stipulate detailed use parameters and site development standards.

Achieving consistency between zoning and land use designations is required by law. In practice, this means that uses allowed in specific zoning districts should be compatible

with the intent of the land use designation on the property. For purposes of determining land use and zoning compatibility, the City's official land use designations will continue to be those defined in the City's *Comprehensive Plan*.

Currently the City has thirty-five separate base zoning districts. Twelve are represented in the South Loop District. See **Figure 3.24**, below. There are also five overlay zoning districts applied to specific parcels in South Loop. Overlay zoning provides additional use parameters and development standards beyond those required by the base zoning.

Figure 3.24 Existing Zoning, 2008



Source: Bloomington Comprehensive Plan 2008.

Overlay districts include:

- Flood Hazard Overlay (FH);
- Airport Runway Overlay (AR-17);
- Bluff Protection Overlay (BP-1 and BP-2); and
- Planned Development Overlay (PD).

With a few exceptions, the existing zoning is compatible with the land use designations in both the South Loop Land Use Framework and the *Comprehensive Plan*. The zoning amendments described below will eliminate any existing zoning/land use inconsistencies.

Proposed Zoning Amendments

About half of the parcels north of 86th Street are recommended for zoning amendments. See **Figure 3.25**, page 3.48. Proposed zoning changes fall into three types:

- 1) Application of a new (not yet created) zoning designation;

- 2) Application of a different zoning designation (where the new designation is an existing zoning category); and

- 3) Application of the commercial zoning districts adopted in 2006.

The majority of zoning changes involve application of new commercial zoning districts (adopted in 2006) and won't significantly change the status or types of uses permitted on the property. While the relationship between the existing and new commercial zoning districts is not one-to-one, the recommended zoning was selected to most closely match the existing use or to best reflect desired future uses.

Proposed zoning amendments are shown on **Figure 3.25**, below, and include:

1. Rezoning of several parcels along I-494, Killebrew Drive, and the former Long Meadow Circle, to replace existing commercial zoning designations (CO-1 and CS-1) with the Freeway Commercial (C-4) commercial zoning designation adopted in 2006.

2. Rezoning of ten parcels that make up the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) to Freeway Office (C-4) to be consistent with adjacent properties along I-494. It is also recommended that the Planned Development (PD) overlay be eliminated, however the AR-17 Airport Runway Overlay District would remain in place.

3. Rezoning of a parcel owned by MnDOT located east of the MVNWR Headquarters to Conservancy (SC) to reflect its use and ensure it remains undeveloped.

4. Rezoning of 10 parcels south of American Boulevard and east of 34th Avenue to High Intensity Mixed Use (HX-R) to be consistent with zoning on adjacent properties (i.e., BCS).

5. Rezoning of seven parcels in and around the Forest Glen Park to Conservancy (SC) to accommodate a proposed new park and trail head, and to protect the ravine environment from intensive development.

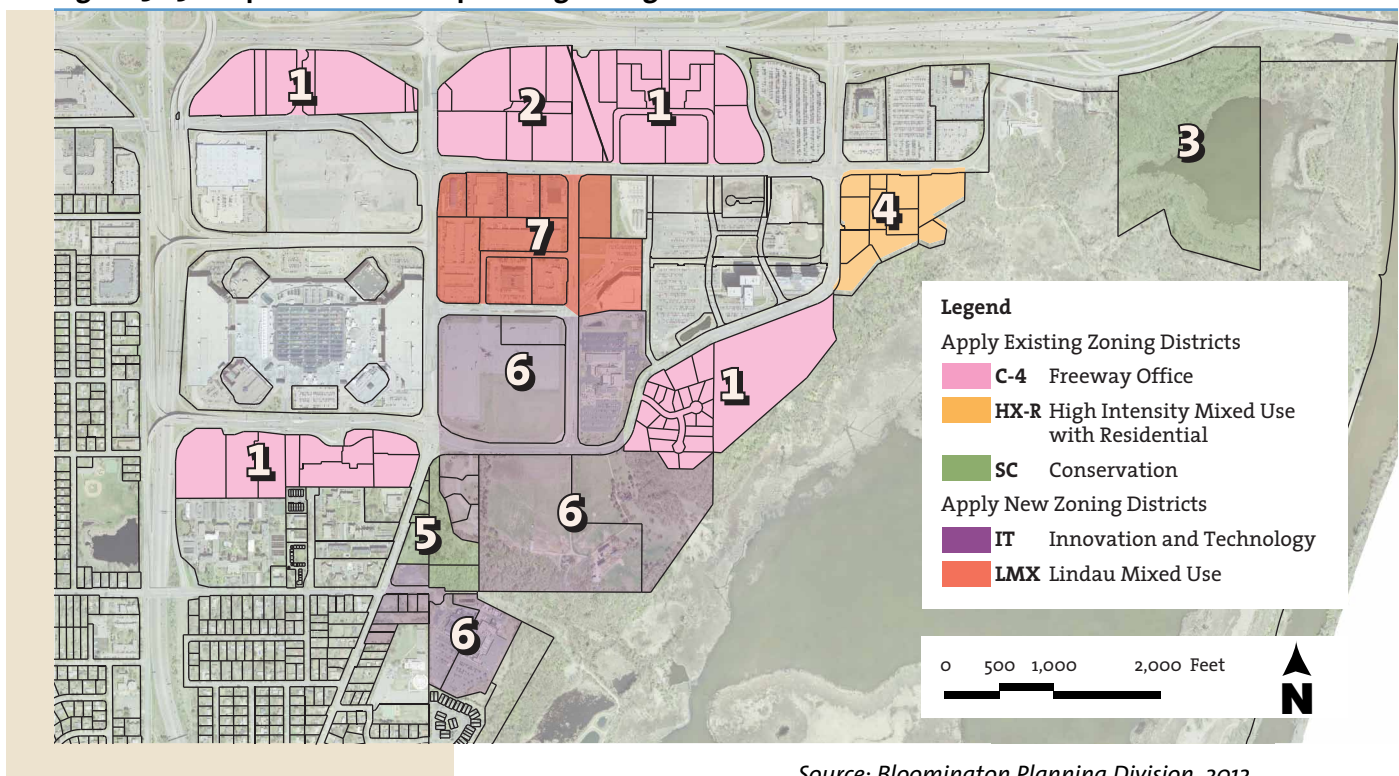
6. Creation of a new zoning district focused on “innovation” or high-tech type manufacturing. This new – Innovation and Technology (IT) –

zoning designation will be applied to 19 parcels; several of which are currently developed and/or used for high-tech manufacturing and fabrication (i.e., Polar Semiconductor and Cypress).

7. Creation of a new zoning district to foster a higher density mix of office, hotel, retail, and services uses along Lindau Link. This new – Lindau Mixed Use (LMX) – zoning designation will be applied to ten (10) parcels abutting the new Lindau Link roadway.

Except as noted above, all existing overlay zoning districts will remain intact.

Figure 3.25 Proposed South Loop Zoning Changes



Source: Bloomington Planning Division, 2012.



Section 3

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3.3 Framework Components (continued)

Section 3.3.2: Circulation and Movement Framework

This framework proposes establishing a multi-modal network of complete streets that will facilitate the safe, efficient, and effective movement of people, goods and services as South Loop transitions into a more urban place. A complete street network focuses on all transportation modes: automobiles and trucks, bicycles, pedestrians, and mass transit, while considering the effects of the adjacent Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP).

Key objectives for establishing a sustainable circulation and movement system are to:

- Satisfy the access needs for all transportation types in a safe manner while limiting effects on the environment and natural resources;
- Provide transportation alternatives to increase non-automobile modal share;
- Operate the transportation system in an affordable and efficient manner;
- Support a vibrant and diverse economy and mix of land uses;
- Promote energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Provide a flexible transportation system able to adjust to changing needs.

Given its adjacency to the MSP, regional freeways, and light rail, South Loop has transportation

advantages that many other areas in the MSP metro region do not.

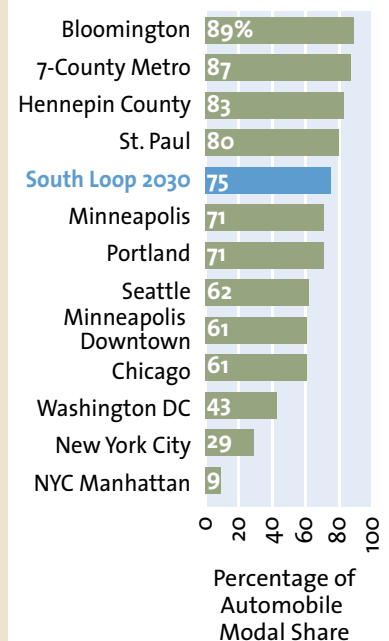
Modal share is a major indicator of transportation sustainability. It describes the distribution of transportation trips between various modes of travel. Changes in modal share are affected by factors such as fuel price and changes in commuting patterns. Providing transportation options allows users to choose modes that use less energy, create less pollution, save money, and help ease congestion.

Reducing automobile mode share is particularly critical in achieving more sustainable transportation. As an area becomes more urban, the automobile modal share often decreases. See **Figure 3.26** at right. Dense urban areas, like New York City, approach an automobile modal share as low as 9 percent.

Trips in suburban areas are 80-90 percent via automobile. Today automobile share in South Loop is



Figure 3.26
Comparison of Automobile
Modal Share in 13
Metropolitan Centers



Source: U.S. Community Survey, 2009.



The Minneapolis-St. Paul region ranks high in a number of congestion indexes for large urban areas with similar population.

Source: Texas Transportation Institute Urban Mobility Report, 2010.

Regional congestion is addressed in the Metropolitan Council's *Regional Transportation Policy Plan*, November 2010.

Download the document at <http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/tpp/2010/index.htm>.

Figure 3.27 Transportation Advantages in the South Loop District



Source: City of Bloomington, 2012.

89 percent. Given the probability that the cost to purchase and operate automobiles will continue to increase and with South Loop projected to become more dense, a goal has been set to reduce automobile modal share in South Loop to 75 percent by 2030. Given the existing excellent transit service, including four light rail stations, and proposed improvements in bicycle facilities, this goal is reasonably attainable.

Regional Transportation Context

South Loop is located equidistant between the central business districts of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Due to its growth potential, the Metropolitan Council included South Loop as one of four areas, along with downtown Minneapolis, downtown St. Paul and the University of Minnesota, requiring transportation

facilities and services significantly different from those in other areas of the region.

Another aspect that makes South Loop unique in the region is that it abuts MSP – the 12th busiest airport in the U.S. – and enjoys direct connections to regional freeways (I-494 and TH 77) and the LRT Blue line (aka Hiawatha Line). See **Figure 3.27** above. MSP brings regional and global access to the doorstep of South Loop. However, this close proximity also presents disadvantages, such as aircraft noise and building height restrictions, that must be mitigated.

Congestion and inefficient mobility in the regional system is a major mobility concern affecting the region and South Loop. Inefficient mobility and congestion contributes to:

- Loss of workforce productivity due to added travel time (opportunity cost);

- Wasted fuel:
 - Higher transportation costs,
 - Increased particulate air pollution,
 - Increased greenhouse gas emissions;
- Slower emergency response;
- Increased driver stress; and
- Travel time unpredictability.

Congestion on I-494 poses challenges to South Loop's regional accessibility. In particular, the bottleneck at the interchange with I-35W adds to the relative seclusion of South Loop from the employment and entrepreneurial base in the southwest metro areas of Edina, Eden Prairie, and west Bloomington. Ensuring efficient access is essential to attract workers, visitors, and residents to South Loop. Improvements to I-494 will facilitate easier access to South Loop. In addition, transit use should continue to be supported and promoted as a viable alternative and more-efficient means of access to South Loop from throughout the region.

Street Infrastructure and Urban Form

The type, location, and alignment of new streets in South Loop relates to the access needs of future development. The circulation network must provide for multiple travel modes to accommodate people living, working, recreating, or shopping in South Loop. A related challenge will be making a large-scale suburban environment feel 'smaller' and more urban in character and form. Establishing an interconnected street grid is fundamental to this transformation. New streets will be located and

aligned to divide existing mega-blocks into smaller, urban-scaled street blocks.

The envisioned street network is shown in **Figure 3.28, page 3.52**. The proposed "fine-grained" street grid pattern increases connectivity and efficiency by providing direct routes that maximize movement choices and support modal alternatives. This grid pattern also helps achieve key objectives, including increased pedestrian and bicycle movement, providing short and long-term parking alternatives, expanding service delivery options and improving public transit access. In addition, smaller blocks and active ground-level uses can entice people to walk by making walking trips more direct, interesting and productive.

Complete Streets

A complete street is a transportation facility that may serve pedestrians, transit users, bicyclists, motorists and large trucks. Complete streets often serve multiple functions, from providing safe, and sometimes shared transportation space, to non-transportation functions such as stormwater management through provision of infiltration features. Complete streets play an essential role in transforming the character and density of South Loop from suburban to urban. The fine-grained and multi-modal street network envisioned for South Loop fits hand-in-hand with Bloomington's *Complete Streets Policy*.

There is no single model for sustainable complete street design;

The City adopted a *Complete Streets Policy* in February 2012. The policy is on the City's website, www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keywords: Complete streets.



Sustainable Complete Street Objectives

Movement Objectives

- Increase connectivity, access, and modal choices.
- Reduce trip lengths.
- Facilitates transit services.

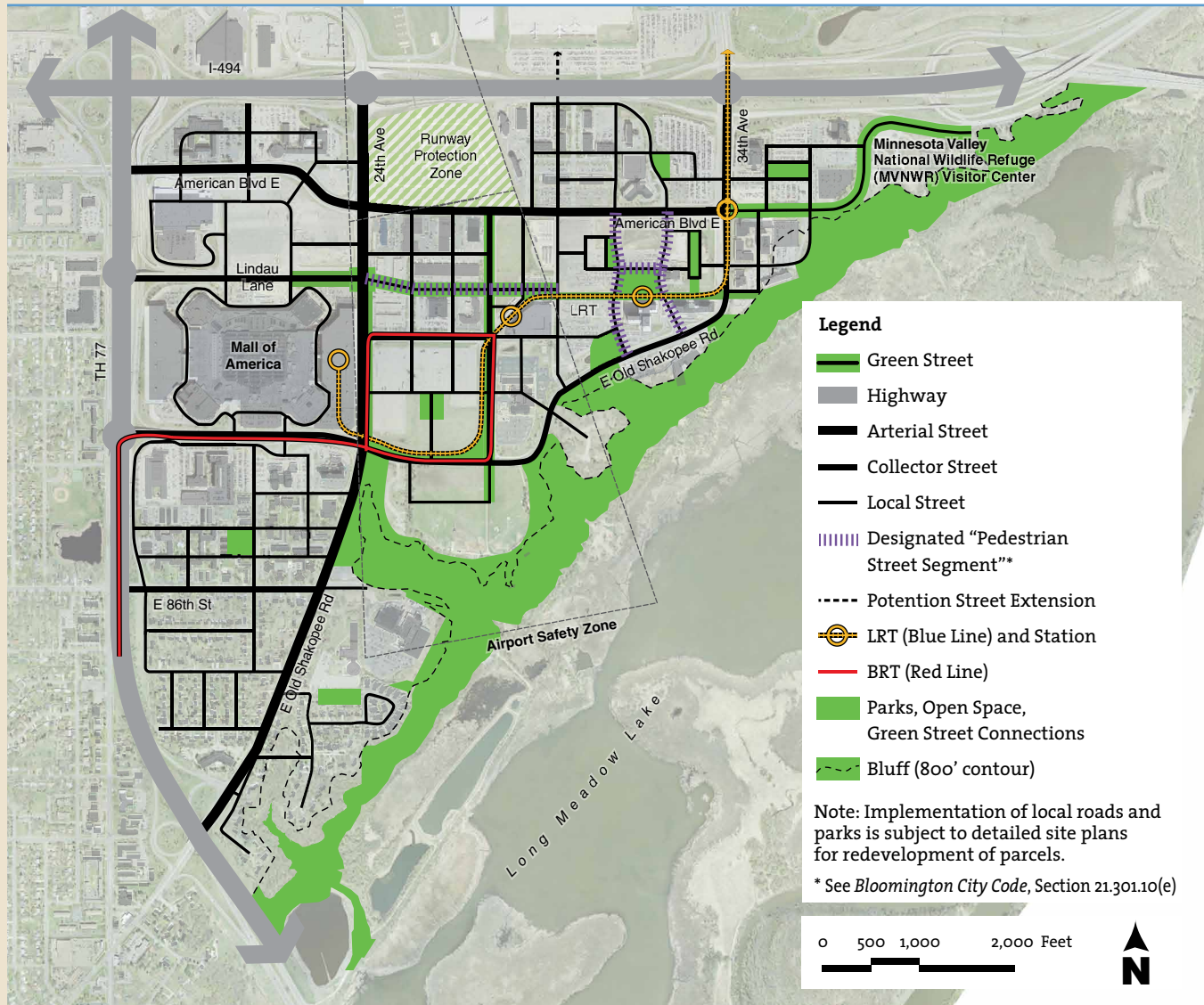
Environmental Objectives

- Reduce pollution by reducing automobile modal share.
- Facilitate stormwater management.
- Incorporate energy efficient signals, lighting and transit facilities.
- Increase tree canopy coverage.

Community Development Objectives

- Create attractive and multi-functional streetscape .
- Increase pedestrian activities to encourage shopping and entertainment.
- Create value for adjoining properties.

Figure 3.28 Circulation and Movement Framework



Source: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC. and City of Bloomington, 2012.

streets must be designed to provide flexibility to meet a variety of movement, environmental, and community development objectives. Streets in South Loop will be designed to respond to their specific development context, recognizing that future conditions may warrant changes over time.

Street Classification

The street classification system considers the physical characteristics of a street in relationship to its

purpose, function, management, and design characteristics. Street character and use influence development form and activity levels within an area or neighborhood.

There are four types of streets designated in the South Loop Circulation and Movement Framework. Functional descriptions of each type are described below:

Arterial Street – These are high volume multi-lane roads, with a median that accommodates left

turns. On-street parking is not allowed and property access is minimized.

Collector Street – These are two- or four- lane roads that may include parking lanes, activity zones, and dedicated bike lanes or separated bike path on the sidewalk, depending on the specific context.

Local Street – These are two-lane roads, including service drives, parking access, and alleys.

Green Street – These are Collector or Local Streets, as defined above, enhanced with sustainable infrastructure, landscaping, and pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

Intersections

Proposed intersection spacing is shown on the Circulation Framework, see **Figure 3.28**, page 3.52, although intersection types are not shown. Since this plan has a 40-year horizon, it is not feasible to accurately determine specific intersection types and controls at this time. Traffic studies and Intersection Control Evaluations (ICE) will be performed periodically as South Loop develops. These will identify appropriate intersection controls and available traffic movements. These studies will be funded, in part, by the surcharge applied to building permits in South Loop.

Bicycle System and Facilities

Despite the cold winter climate, the Minneapolis-St. Paul area ranks high in the percentage of bicycle commuters. It is apparent that a bicycle culture exists and is thriving

in the MSP metro. South Loop will embrace this culture shift and provide facilities that foster this sustainable transportation mode.

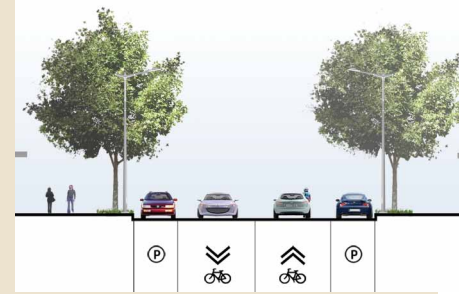
Bicycle facilities and routes proposed in South Loop (see **Figure 3.34**, page 3.64) reflect the recommendations in Bloomington’s *Alternative Transportation Plan* (ATP), adopted in 2008. The ATP recommends a variety of bicycle facilities from on-road dedicated lanes to off-road trail facilities.

Connections to the regional trail system and adjacent communities are provided by two proposed trails: the Inter-City Regional Trail and the Nine-Mile Creek Regional Trail. These proposed regional trails and the existing 86th Street bikeway also provide opportunities for bicycle commuting.

As new streets are designed in South Loop, bike lanes will be considered if appropriate to the specific street context. For example, the initial design of the Lindau Link will include dedicated on-street bike lanes. Later, if an additional travel lane is needed in each direction, one will be designed as a “sharrow”, which is a travel lane shared by bicycles and other vehicles. See *sidebar*.

Public bike racks will be provided along some roads (in the public right-of-way) and on public parkland. Private developers will also be encouraged to provide bike racks and lockers for their employees and customers.

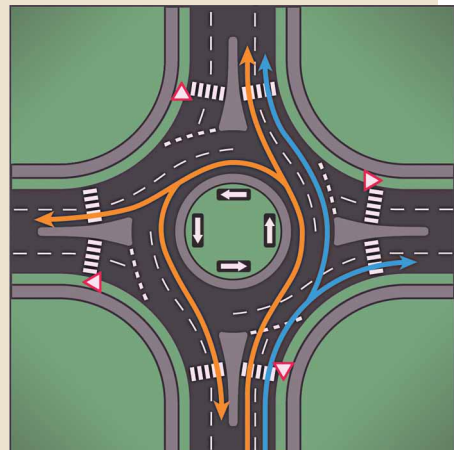
Bicycle sharing systems are an emerging means to make bicycling



A sharrow is a travel lane shared by bicycles and other vehicles.



Minneapolis initiated its Nice Ride bicycle sharing program in June 2010.



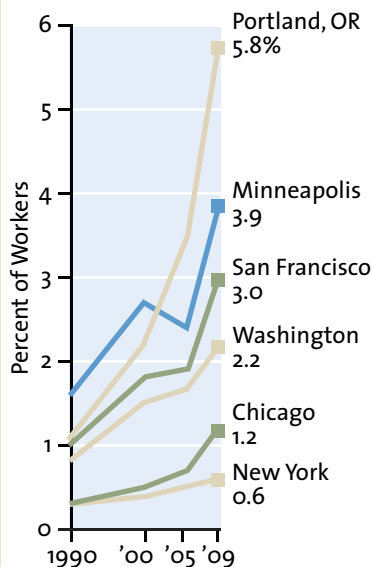
Roundabouts are designed to make intersections safer and more efficient for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists.

Top Biking Cities

In its 2010 “Bicycling’s Top 50” survey, *Bicycling Magazine* ranked Minneapolis as the top biking city in the nation.

In 2009 Minneapolis ranked second in the portion of commuters who bike to work, with a bike modal share of 3.9 percent, second only to Portland at 5.8 percent. See **Figure 3.29**, below.

Figure 3.29
Who Commutes by Bicycle,
1990 - 2009



Source: John Pucher, Rutgers University; New York Times, 9/11/2011.

a more convenient and cost-effective modal choice. Minneapolis instituted its Nice Ride bike sharing program in June 2010, providing 60 bike station “kiosks” around the City. The program was very well received and in 2011 expanded to 100 kiosks in both Minneapolis and St. Paul. As South Loop develops and becomes denser, it will become a good candidate for implementing a bicycle-sharing program given the mix of residents, visitors, and employees in the area and the relatively short distances between major destinations. The ability to take bikes on the Light Rail Transit (LRT) greatly expands the reach of the current Nice Ride network of kiosks.

Pedestrian Sidewalk Network

Increasing walkability is a key goal of this plan. To do that, new streets will be located to create shorter blocks that accommodate pedestrian activity and expand route choices. Sidewalks will be provided on all streets, with the exception of unconnected spurs that lead only to the freeway system (such as the westerly block of Killebrew Drive). Sidewalk widths will vary depending on abutting development and anticipated pedestrian use. Trees, landscaping, lighting, and other amenities (e.g., benches, waste receptacles) will be provided to increase pedestrian comfort, improve aesthetics, and help with stormwater management.

The majority of pedestrian sidewalks will be located at street level. Grade-separated pedestrian bridges will be located where pedestrian safety and traffic signal benefits (e.g.,

eliminating the pedestrian phase) outweigh the benefits of street-level activity. Such a bridge will be constructed over Killebrew Drive in 2013, providing pedestrian access to Mall of America (MOA). See *image in sidebar on the next page*. In the future, a pedestrian bridge may be constructed over 34th Avenue north of American Boulevard to create a safe pedestrian crossing and provide access to the northbound portion of the American Boulevard LRT station.

Transit Service and Facilities

Transit plays an important role in facilitating circulation and movement in South Loop by:

- Providing inter-district trips;
- Connecting South Loop to the Twin Cities region;
- Connecting South Loop to the MSP airport as a global gateway;
- Providing an alternative to automobile trips; and
- Extending the range of pedestrian and bicycle trips.

Transit facilities and availability will also influence the form and pattern of development through implementation of a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) development model in South Loop. Higher densities characterize TOD and a mix of uses located within a convenient 1/4-mile walk from LRT stations. South Loop contains four LRT stations making it a prime candidate for TOD development.

Good transit service also supports the triple bottom line for sustainability (environment, economic, and social). It is environmentally friendly;

relieves traffic congestion; and fosters compact, walkable mixed-use communities. Additionally, it offers mobility options for all socioeconomic levels.

Transit System Evolution

South Loop has long enjoyed good transit service. As the district grows, transit will play an increasingly important role in fostering new development. Factors that have shaped the transit system in South Loop include:

1. South Loop's growth since the 1970s established the office and retail employment base;
2. Development of the MOA (Bus) Transit Facility with the opening of the Mall in 1992;
3. Construction of the Hiawatha LRT line (now Blue Line) in 2004, including stations at: MOA Transit Facility, Bloomington Central Station (BCS), and 28th Avenue;
4. Continued investment in Blue Line LRT facilities, including the 28th Avenue Park and Ride (1,450 parking spaces completed in 2008) and the American Boulevard LRT station (2009);
5. Planned 2013 opening of the Red Line (aka Cedar Bus Rapid Transit, operated by Minnesota Valley Transit) from Apple Valley (and eventually Lakeville) to the MOA Transit Station;
6. Projected opening of the Green Line (aka Central Corridor LRT) in 2014 connecting downtown Minneapolis to downtown St. Paul and the University of Minnesota; and

7. Three future Rapid Bus or BRT routes planned to converge at the MOA Transit Station.

As a result of this progression, South Loop is now served by a multifaceted, high frequency, transit system consisting of 14 LRT, BRT and local bus routes. South Loop has the busiest transit hub in the state, the MOA Transit Center. Three existing bus routes may be converted to a higher-amenity service to be known as Rapid Bus (a version of BRT).

Figure 3.30, page 3.56, illustrates existing LRT, BRT, and express bus routes in the metro area surrounding South Loop.

Transit Providers



Metro Transit operates bus and LRT routes in Hennepin and Ramsey counties that connect to South Loop. As the south terminus of the Blue LRT Line, South Loop is an important regional transit hub. Metro Transit currently operates eight bus routes that serve South Loop; most terminate at the MOA transit station. Three of these may be converted to Rapid Bus, which will bring faster, more regular, service and will likely use distinctive bus vehicles.



In coordination with Metro Transit, MVTA operates routes that extend south into Dakota County. It currently operates six bus routes that serve South Loop. These routes will be converted to the Red Line (Cedar

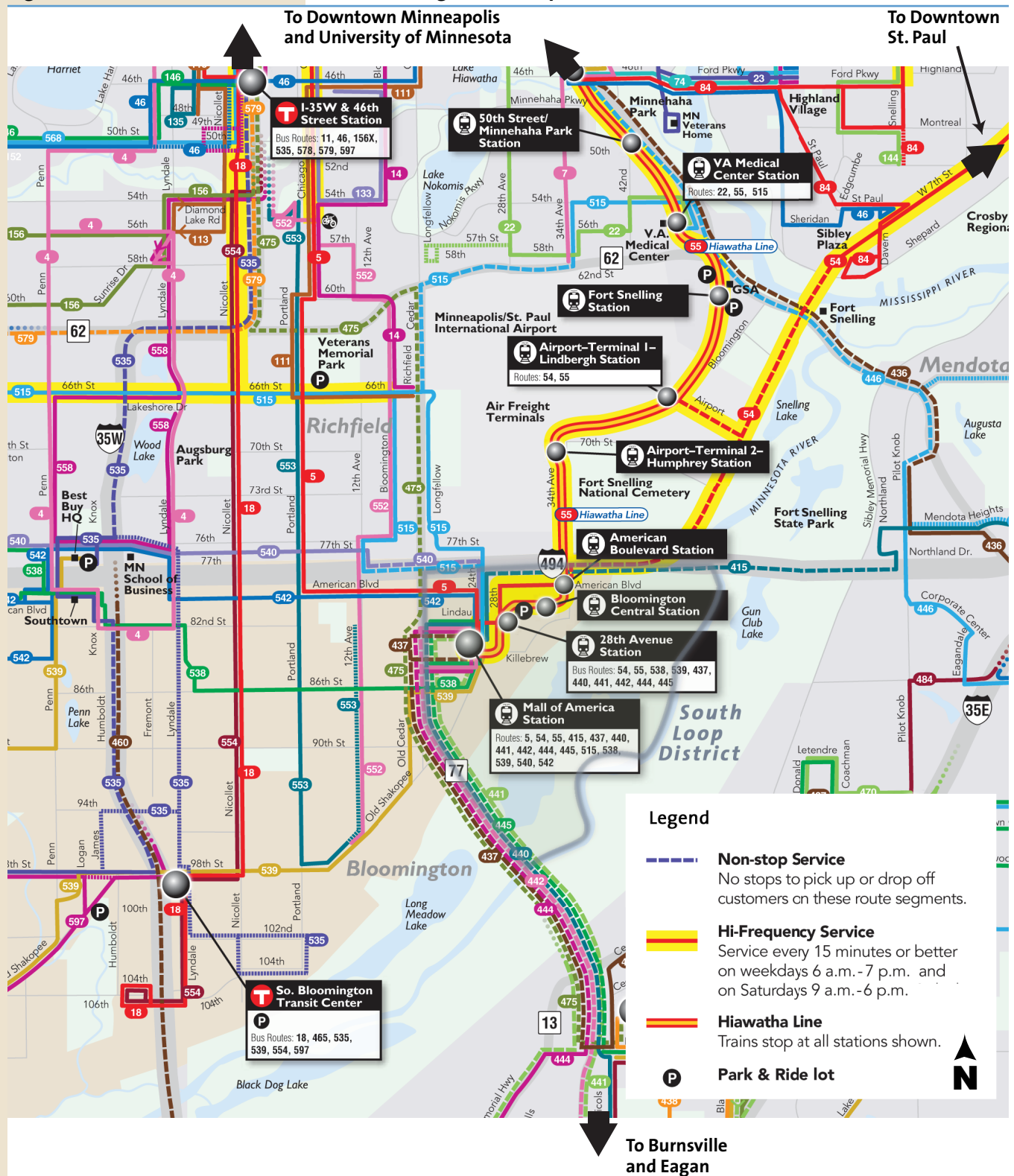


The Killebrew pedestrian bridge creates a safe pedestrian crossing over Killebrew Drive.



Bus Rapid Transit uses higher-amenity vehicles to increase rider experience.

Figure 3.30 Metro Area Transit Routes Serving South Loop District



Source: Twin Cities Metropolitan Area Transit System Map, Metro Transit, March 2012.

BRT) that is planned to begin station-to-station service in 2013 and may have two stops in South Loop at the MOA Transit Facility and the 28th Avenue LRT station.



Southwest Transit Authority (SWTA)

SWTA primarily operates out of the southwest suburbs. They previously operated routes serving South Loop and may reinstate some routes in the future to connect the Eden Prairie Transit Station to the MOA Transit Facility. Whether this route is operated by SWTA or Metro Transit is undetermined and it may become a Rapid Bus route along American Boulevard.

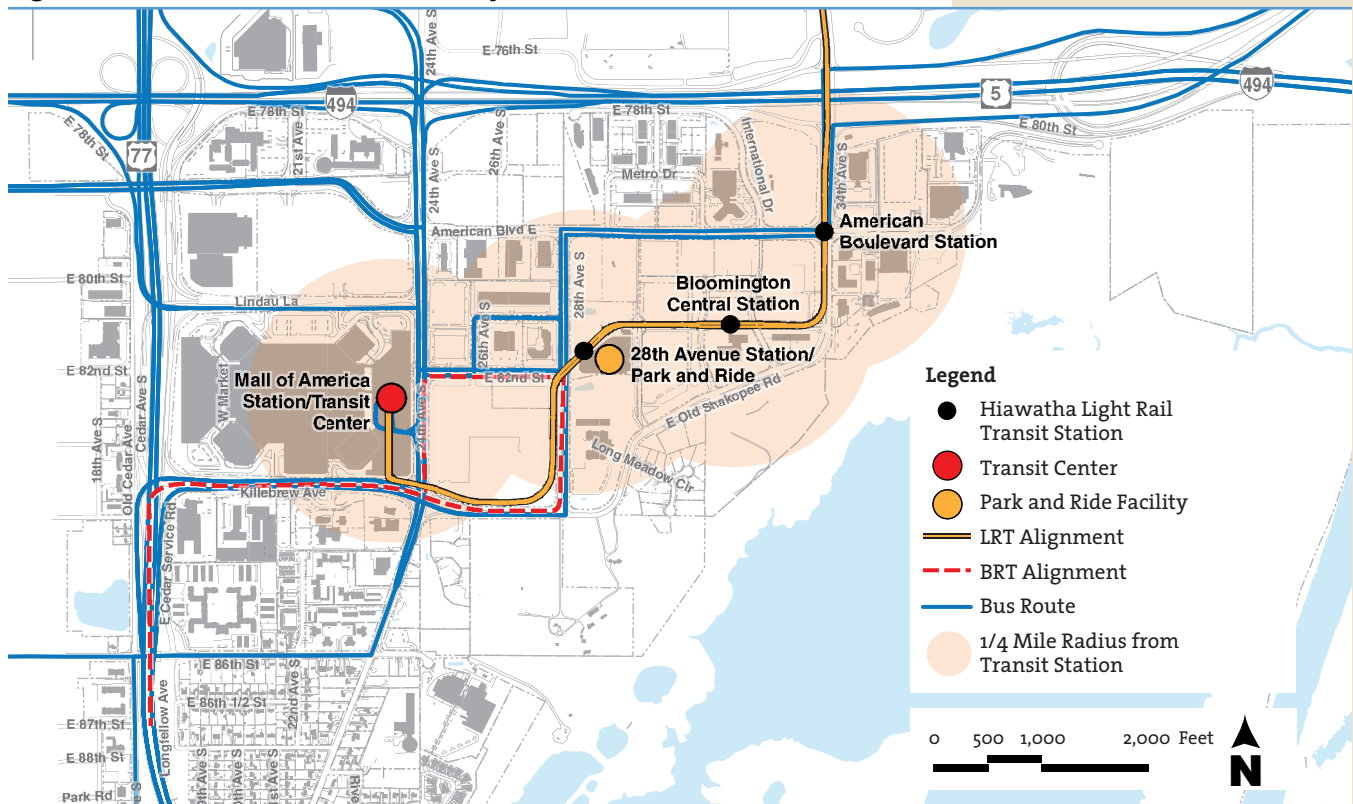
Other Routes

A commuter bus, operated through collaboration between Rochester City Lines and Richfield Bus Company, currently provides service between the City of Rochester (and Mayo Clinic) and South Loop.

Existing Transit Facilities

One of South Loop's unique assets is the presence of four LRT stations. This gives the district a distinct advantage over other suburban areas. **Figure 3.31**, below, shows that much of South Loop is within convenient walking distance to an LRT station. These stations – particularly at BCS and American Boulevard – are planned to become nodes for TOD, including residential uses.

Figure 3.31 Transit Station Accessibility



Source: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC.



To increase transit trips, convenient and frequent stop locations must be located adjacent to development.



The 28th Avenue Park and Ride is served by LRT and several bus routes.

In addition to LRT, key transit facilities in South Loop include:

MOA Transit Facility

This is the busiest transit hub in the state of Minnesota. Located on the ground floor of the MOA east-parking ramp, this is the activity center of the transit system in South Loop. It currently accommodates approximately 1,630 bus and light rail daily arrivals/departures. By comparison, about 1,200 planes arrive/depart at MSP each day. According to the *Mall of America Intercept Study* (2006), approximately 18 percent of MOA visitors arrive by transit at the MOA Transit Facility. The modal break down is 11 percent by LRT and 7 percent by bus. The MOA Transit Facility's hub status makes South Loop a transit focal point within the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

28th Avenue LRT Station and Park & Ride

The 28th Avenue LRT station includes a 1,450 space park and ride ramp. Opened in 2008, the park and ride primarily serves commuters coming from the south. This ramp is used extensively during special events, such as Twins baseball games.

Transit Growth

Through 2050, new development in South Loop is projected to add over 28,000 jobs and over 4,700 residents. These new employees and residents will inevitably increase transit use in South Loop. The goal is to increase the overall percent of transit trips (i.e., modal share) relative to non-transit trips, not just the number of

riders. To do that transit must be:

- Convenient (frequent stops) and easy to get to;
- Focused on passenger comfort and safety;
- Complementary to the street environment;
- Cost-effective;
- Located to support adjacent development; and
- Flexible and responsive to changing needs.

Currently, transit accounts for about 3,200 (10 percent) of trips made by existing employees and residents in South Loop. New development in South Loop will follow a TOD mixed use model. Research has shown that residents of TODs typically reduce automobile use by 15-30 percent, shifting about half of those trips to transit suggests that transit trips could increase 7.5-15 percent as South Loop develops. Being slightly conservative, it is assumed that transit trips could make up 16 to 22 percent of trips made by South Loop employees and residents in 2030 and 2050, respectively. The projected increase in transit trips through 2050 is shown in **Table 3.11** and **Figure 3.32**, *next page*.

Emerging trends show increased use of technology in transit systems. Global Positional Systems (GPS) are being used to locate buses and give them traffic signal priority. Buses and trains are being fitted with Wi-Fi as a benefit to attract new customers. Smart phone applications are being developed to accurately relay bus/train arrival times; Google Maps mobile transit

Table 3.11 Growth in Transit Users, 2010-2050

South Loop Population	2010	2030	2050
Employees	30,950	44,800	58,980
Residents	2,000	4,850	6,740
Total Daily Population	32,950	49,650	65,720
Transit Users	3,200	7,900	14,500

Assumptions: Existing transit trip rate = 10 percent; 2030 rate = 16 percent; and 2050 rate = 22 percent

Source: City of Bloomington, 2012.

option eliminates confusion in route selection. These technologies make transit more predictable, attractive, and convenient to use.

Special fare zones are another strategy to incent transit use. Some local examples include downtown Minneapolis, where a zone was established to allow reduced fares for transit trips within a specific area. At MSP, there is no charge for transit trips between the two terminals. To encourage transit use within South Loop, consideration should be given to establishing a reduced fare zone.

Future Transit Facilities

To accommodate anticipated growth in transit use and to make transit use more convenient and user-friendly, the existing system should be enhanced as follows:

MOA Transit Facility Improvements

As noted above, this is the busiest transit hub in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and thus the State of Minnesota. It is not a park and ride, but serves as a transfer and layover hub, and is a major destination (i.e., MOA). While functional, it lacks fundamental

features of a first-rate transit hub, including:

Visibility: The location of the transit facility within the MOA parking structure renders it invisible from outside. There is no Metro Transit signage visible on the outside of the Mall.

Comfort and Aesthetic Appeal: The interior space feels dingy and barren. The spartan furnishings provide meager comfort to the 5,000+ transit customers that use the facility on an average day. The station appears poorly lit, even though light levels meet current city code requirements.

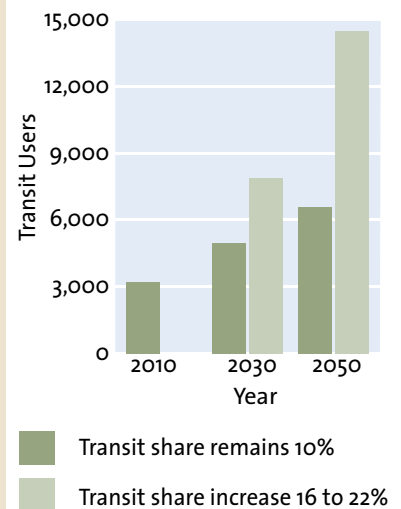
Efficient Bus Access: Security inspections are required for all vehicles entering the station area. This added time, reduces travel-time efficiency, which is a primary goal of transit operations. This will need to be considered when bus gates need to be expanded in the future as routes expand and headways become more frequent.

Clear and Convenient Pedestrian Access: Pedestrian access into the MOA Transit Station from the outside is inadequate, circuitous and hidden. A visually prominent street-level pedestrian entrance is essential



This example of a multi-use, integrated transit facility has street-level pedestrian access that makes mass transit an attractive choice of transportation.

Figure 3.32 Increase in Transit Modal Share, 2010 - 2050



Source: City of Bloomington, 2012.

Projected new development will double transit users by 2050, even if current transit modal share does not change. If transit modal share increases, ridership will more than double by 2030.

to make transit the “easy choice.”

Convenient pedestrian access to this major transit hub may also benefit future development on Lindau Link and the “adjoining lands” parcels east of MOA.

To allow this transit hub to realize its full potential, it should be physically modified to address the deficiencies described above. As the highest volume transit hub in the metropolitan region, enhancements to this facility should be given priority.

District-wide Street-side Bus Facilities

While LRT enjoys high visibility because of the train tracks and large stations; buses can become invisible – blending into the urban environment. Developing highly visible and attractive transit stops along streets are one way to promote transit. As the complete street grid is developed in South Loop, recognizable and visually distinctive bus stops should be developed. They should have amenities that encourage transit use by enhancing user comfort and convenience.

Shared Parking

Shared parking allows neighboring land uses to use the same parking supply at different times, reducing the total number of parking spaces needed in a given area. Individual land uses have characteristic times of peak parking demand. During the non-peak times for one use, parking can be made available for other, nearby land uses.

While the City’s Zoning Ordinance currently allows for shared parking

as a flexibility option, becoming more pro-active in encouraging use of shared parking in South Loop can help achieve the goals of making the district more sustainable and economically competitive.

Shared parking can lead to more **sustainable development** because:

- It allows for more dense development, since less land is dedicated for parking spaces.
- It reduces the amount of energy, resources and money allocated to building and maintaining parking.
- It reduces impervious surface cover and thus helps manage storm water quality and runoff volumes and rates.

Shared parking can be an **effective development incentive**. Since sharing can reduce the number of total spaces that must be built, development costs can be reduced. A primary challenge for shared parking in South Loop is that the area is perceived as suburban and currently contains several large surface parking lots. Typical suburban development includes parking dedicated to single uses and controlled by the property owner. Implementing shared parking on a district scale in South Loop will necessitate a paradigm shift for developers, and more importantly, for lenders to recognize that shared parking does not pose significant development risks, which can complicate financing.

Shared parking can result in **economic benefits** that help make South Loop more competitive. If 5



A group of property owners, through an organization such as a business improvement district (BID), can cooperatively finance and build shared parking.

to 25 percent of required parking is shared throughout South Loop, over \$280 million in development costs can be saved at full build out in 2050. **Table 3.12**, page 3.62, includes data compiled by staff to illustrate the potential cost savings if a minimal to modest level of parking is shared by current and projected development in South Loop.

Figure 3.33 and **Table 3.12**, page 3.62, identify locations in South Loop where required parking spaces could be reduced given the proposed mix of land uses compatible for shared parking. Implementing shared parking in the locations shown could reduce the need for over 14,000 parking spaces.

Implementing Shared Parking

Shared parking can happen “organically,” as it does in downtowns where development is not required to accommodate all parking on-site and parking facilities are allowed as a principle land use, owned and managed by either a public or private entity. In some areas, a public entity builds and owns parking ramps, and charges for parking. While the current market may not tolerate paid parking in South Loop, it may be accepted in the future, as land becomes too valuable to devote to surface parking and expectations about “free” parking change.

Other examples of shared parking provided by the public include:

On-Street Parking: Parking spaces incorporated within the public street right-of-way are another form

of public involvement in shared parking. This plan recommends on-street parking be allowed on certain streets in South Loop, notably along Lindau Link and at BCS. However, the feasibility of on-street parking will depend on the specific context and street typology. This is discussed in greater detail in the *South Loop Design Guidelines*.

Fee in Lieu Parking: A public entity can also lease parking spaces in a public parking facility they own to private developments at an amortized rate below what the developer would pay to build their own single-use parking spaces. Public financing for construction of the parking ramp would be based on these lease payments. Since there is no profit margin realized by the public agency, publicly provided parking can incent more sustainable, dense development.

Public Financing

Tax incentives, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and tax abatement, are the most common forms of public assistance that can be used to construct shared parking facilities. However, public assistance should not be used for single-use parking. The costs and benefits of publicly-owned shared parking will require more targeted study to determine where it could be feasible in South Loop.



Some cities provide electric vehicle charging stations along with on-street parking.

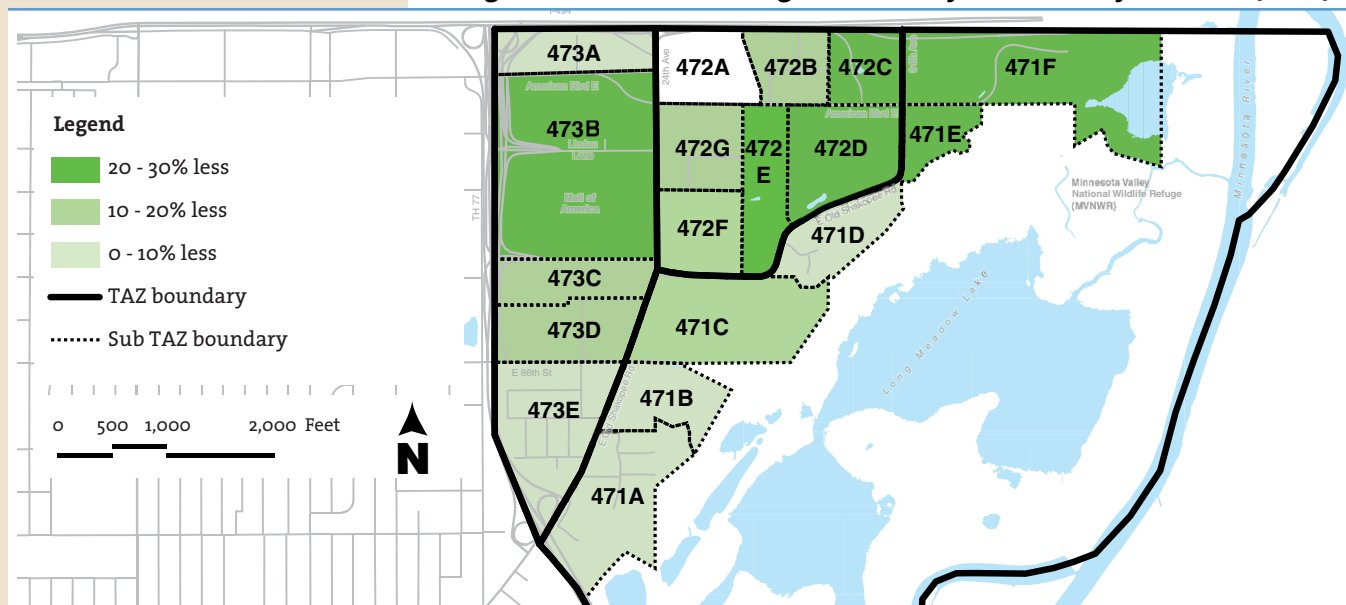
Table 3.12 Shared Parking Potential at Full Development (2050)

Description	Sub TAZ	Shared Reduction	Code Required Spaces	Shared Spaces	Spaces Saved	Saved Construction Cost (\$20,000 per space)
Kelly Farm	471C	15%	1,943	1,651	291	\$5,827,500
Long Meadow, Ceridian	471D	5%	1,558	1,480	78	1,557,591
Appletree	471E	25%	2,299	1,724	575	11,496,063
Embassy, Park-Fly	471F	25%	2,753	2,065	688	13,766,500
Runway Protection Zone	472A					- -
Metro Office	472B	15%	2,352	1,999	353	7,056,000
Park-Go	472C	25%	2,760	2,070	690	13,802,475
Bloomington Central Station	472D	25%	12,092	9,069	3,023	60,460,250
Polar, Park & Ride	472E	25%	451	339	113	2,257,040
Adjoining Lands	472F	15%	3,938	3,347	591	11,813,084
Duke, Fairfield	472G	15%	3,066	2,606	460	9,198,000
T-Bird, Marriot	473A	5%	1,018	967	51	1,017,500
Mall of America I and II	473B	25%	27,183	20,387	6,796	135,912,500
BLN Office Park, Hotels	473C	15%	2,640	2,244	396	7,919,865
			64,052	49,948	14,104	\$282,084,367

Source: City of Bloomington, 2009.

Figure 3.33

Potential Percent Reduction in Parking Due to Shared Parking Identified by Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs)



Source: Bloomington Planning Division, 2012.



Section 3

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3.3 Framework Components (continued)

Section 3.3.3: Parks and Open Space Framework

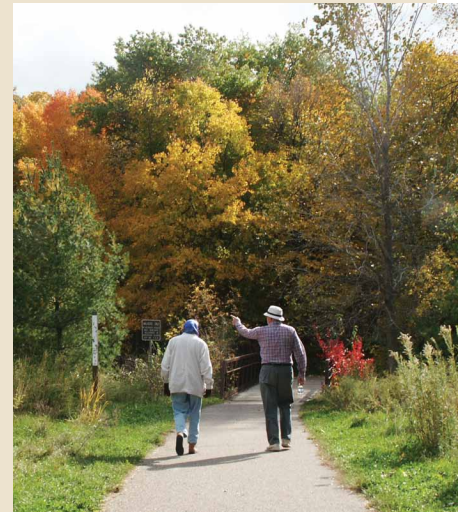
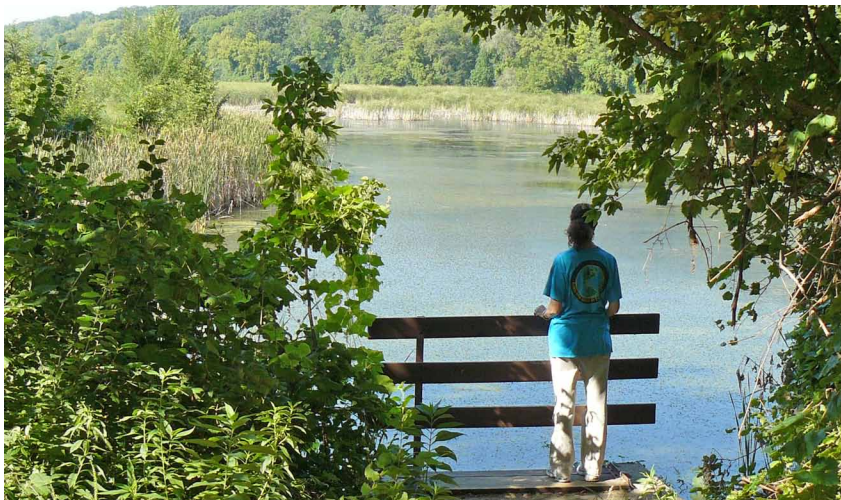
The aesthetic character of South Loop is influenced by the significant amount of natural open space that forms its entire east and southeast border. Most of this open space is within the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR), which provides access to an extensive natural environment and nature-based recreation opportunities. Integrating aspects of this natural ecosystem into the more urban, developed areas of South Loop is a primary goal.

Key objectives regarding parks and open space include:

- To **preserve and enhance natural resources**.
- To **incorporate sustainable features and “green” infrastructure** throughout South Loop.
- To **establish a network of parks and trails** that enhances connections within and beyond South Loop, and improves access to the MVNWR.

- To incorporate parks into development that **creates amenity and value** for abutting properties.
- To **preserve existing cultural resources**.

Figure 3.34, page 3.64, illustrates the primary components of the proposed South Loop parks and open space system. Components are described in more detail.

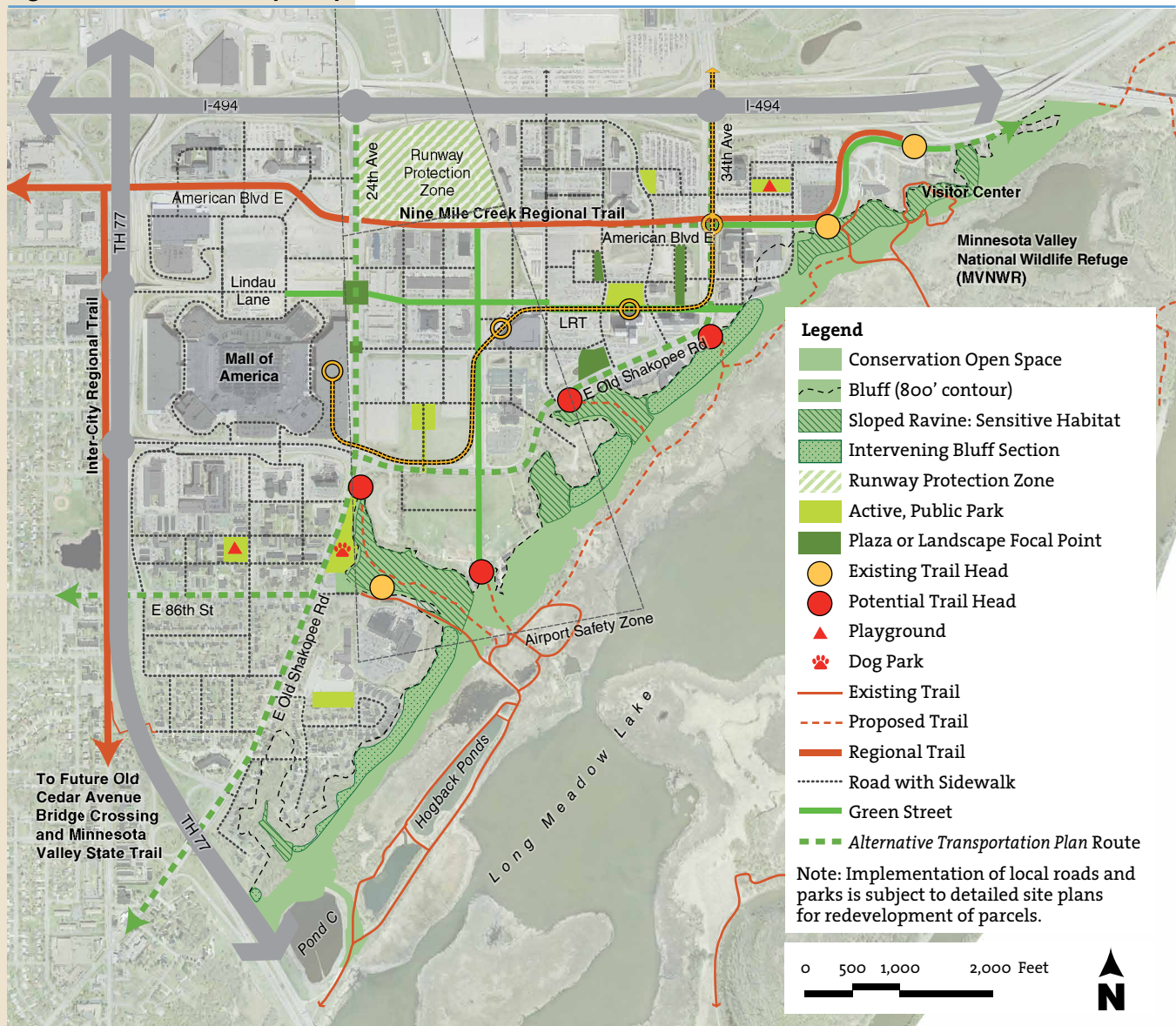


Ample nature-based recreational opportunities are a key asset of South Loop.



Bloomington Central Station Park serves as a focal point and gathering place in the District.

Figure 3.34 Parks and Open Space Framework



Source: Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC.

Preserve and Enhance Natural Resources

Most of the open space and sensitive natural resources are located adjacent to the river bluffs that form the east and south border of the District. Generally, these fall into three areas: the Minnesota River bluff, edge/transition areas, and the MVNWR.

Minnesota River Bluff

The City's *Bluff Report District Plan*, adopted in 1982, describes the bluff as approximately 100 feet in height, composed of coarse sandy loam soils, steeply sloped hillsides (18-35 percent) with a mix of vegetation, including deciduous forest, bluff top prairie, and floodplain forest at the base of the bluff. The Bluff in South Loop is further characterized by two

landform conditions: ravines and intervening lateral bluff sections.

A **ravine** is a small, narrow steep-sided valley that is larger than a gully and smaller than a canyon that is usually shaped by running water. Ravine ecosystems are cool, shaded environments with an over-story tree canopy that limits the growth of understory vegetation. Ravines provide protected habitat and relief from seasonal extremes. Development abutting ravines must provide sound stormwater management, use of native plant vegetation and setbacks from the bluff edge and steep slopes.

The **intervening lateral bluff sections** run parallel to the river bottoms with broad, south facing exposures. An example is the existing bluff south of East 86th Street adjacent to Cypress Semiconductor. The South Loop bluff woodlands had a high dominance of American elm and red oak. These areas have undergone successional change resulting from the loss of the elm. Succession has resulted in less desirable species such as white ash, hackberry, box elder, and buckthorn. Restoration of native species to stabilize succession areas is an important goal.

The Bluff Protection (BP) Overlay zoning districts and the *Bluff Report District Plan* provide a regulatory framework for development in sensitive bluff areas. The BP overlay zones encompass the area between the 722 and 800-foot contour elevations. Current regulations and policies focus on tree removal and

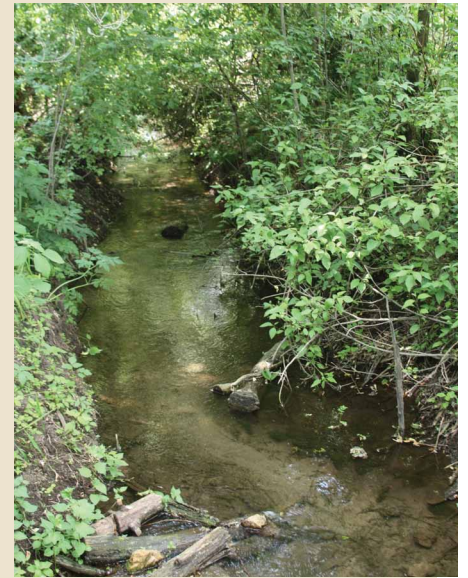
grading, building placement and height policies, and impervious surface coverage. Future site plan review will need to focus more on native species re-vegetation, establishment of buffers, and seep and stream protection.

Edge/Transition Areas

The transition zone between upland urban development areas and the natural bluff edge is characterized by an inter-mingling of ecosystems (aka “ecotone”) that provide a range of habitats that support a diversity of species. These areas perform an important ecological function and should be protected from development encroachment. Development sites located immediately adjacent to the bluff warrant careful site planning to ensure bluff edge/transition areas are adequately protected. These sites include: Spruce Shadows Farm, Long Meadow Circle, a portion of the Appletree Square property, and land southeast of the intersection of East Old Shakopee Road and 24th Avenue, where apartments were removed due to airport impacts.

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR)

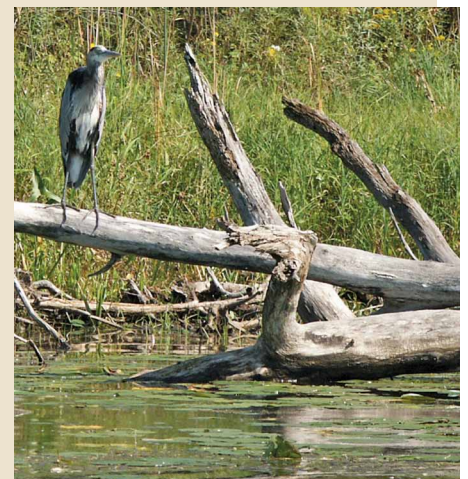
Established by the U.S. Congress in 1976, the MVNWR stretches over 50 miles from Fort Snelling State Park to beyond Belle Plaine, Minnesota. Its 14,000 authorized acres provide habitat for migratory waterfowl, fish, and other wildlife species. The MVNWR offers a variety of nature-based recreation and education opportunities for individuals and



A stream runs through a ravine.



A transitional edge lies between an upland area and a lateral bluff section.



The MVNWR provides extensive habitat for a variety of birds.



Hogback Pond lies within the Long Meadow Lake Unit of the MVNWR.

families. The Bloomington Visitors Center, opened in 1990, is a gateway to the Refuge and also houses the MVNWR Headquarters offices.

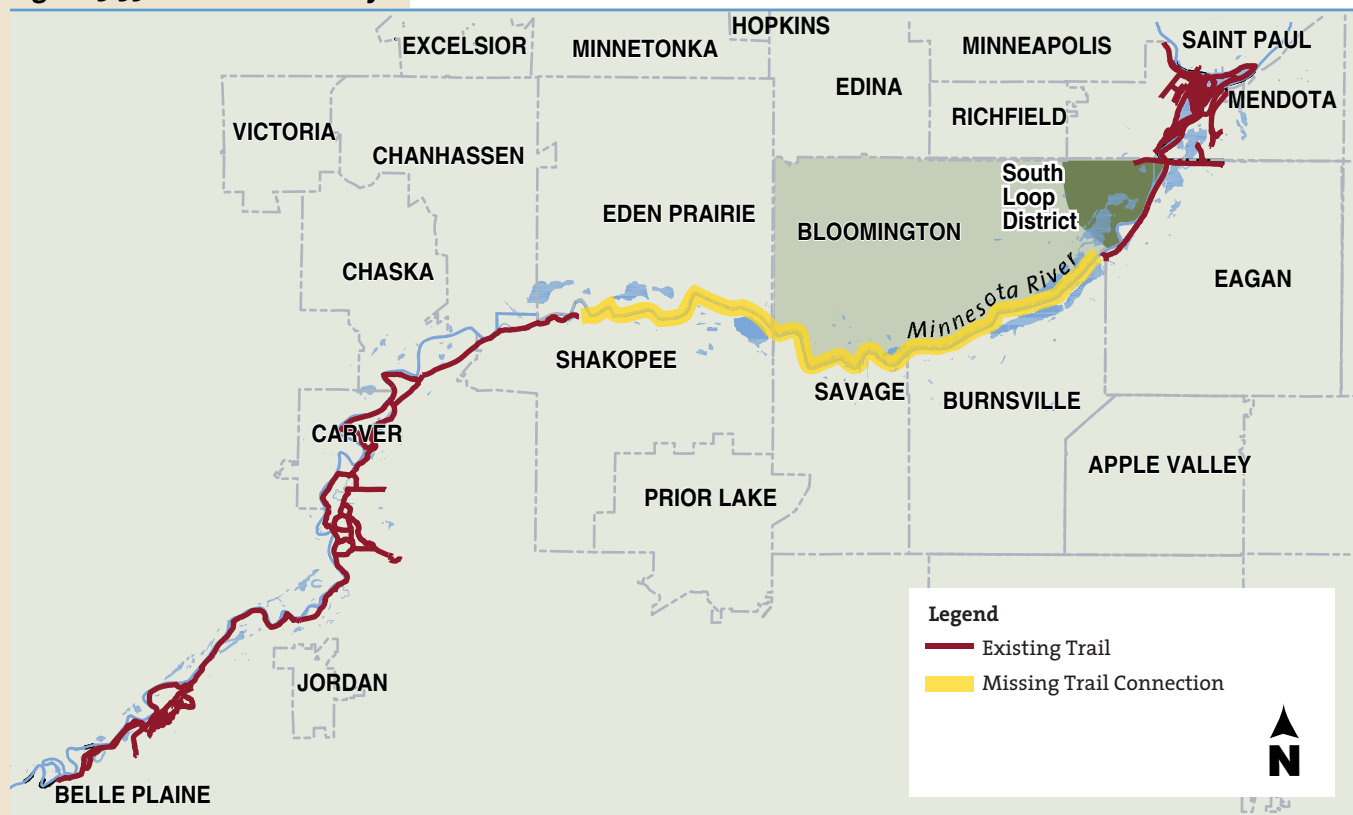
The portion of the MVNWR within South Loop lies within the Long Meadow Lake Unit and is defined by the official floodplain. This area includes Long Meadow Lake, the Hogback and Bass Ponds and is characterized by the steep bluff face, wooded ravines, and bottomlands consisting of flood plain forest, wetland complexes, and the Minnesota River. The MVNWR is owned and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Minnesota Valley State Trail

The idea of a trail system along the Minnesota River was first proposed by Governor Floyd B. Olson in 1934. Now officially named the Minnesota Valley State Trail, it is located within the MVNWR and planned to follow the Minnesota River between Fort Snelling State Park and Big Stone State Park. See **Figure 3.35**, below.

Portions of the trail alignment exist or have been designated. However, the alignment for a major section in the middle, including the portion in Bloomington, has not been officially designated. Efforts to identify the final alignment of this “missing link” are progressing under the guidance of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, who is charged with managing the trail.

Figure 3.35 Minnesota Valley State Trail Connections



Source: City of Bloomington, 2010.

Sustainable Features and Green Infrastructure

Development in South Loop will incorporate a variety of best practices and low-impact design approaches to minimize impacts on natural site characteristics and integrate natural elements throughout the District. Sustainable development techniques may serve multiple functions, from managing drainage and runoff to creating natural character and fostering public and private gardens to improve access to locally grown food.

Stormwater Management

All development is subject to Local, State and/or Federal regulations to manage stormwater runoff. This is particularly important in South Loop, as runoff drains directly to the Minnesota River.

The stream running through Forest Glen Park (aka “Ike’s Creek”) in particular should be protected from stormwater impacts. Maintaining cool water temperatures and high water quality is essential to sustain sensitive plants and fish (e.g., watercress and trout) in this creek.

In addition, airport zoning restricts surface ponds that hold standing water in runway zones to minimize the potential for bird strikes. Consequently, stormwater should be managed through low-impact design techniques, such as rain gardens, green roofs, rainwater harvesting and reuse, and permeable pavements that slow, reduce, and filter storm runoff. These techniques can be installed as part of private

site development or as part of larger, public street or park projects.

Natural Character

As South Loop develops, a key challenge will involve retaining and preserving some of its natural character and integrating natural elements into more intensely developed areas. Existing natural features can be retained through careful site planning. Low-impact site design and use of native plants and local building materials can ensure new development fits – aesthetically and ecologically – and works with, not against, the natural features and drainage systems on a site. Well-landscaped streets can extend the natural elements of the bluff edge throughout the District.

Urban Agriculture

Interest in locally grown food, and community gardening in particular, has noticeably increased in recent years. As South Loop evolves into a more complete neighborhood, interest in incorporating community gardens within the neighborhood landscape will likely grow. A community garden in South Loop would provide gardening opportunities to the 2,700 new residents projected to reside here by 2030, as well as some of the 2,000 existing residents. New residents will mostly live in townhomes, condominiums, and apartments, most without yards for gardens.

One opportunity to create a future community garden site is the Spruce Shadows Farm property.



Ceridian is a good example of sensitive site and landscape design adjacent to the bluff.



Urban agriculture is practiced by residents at the Harrison Park community gardens.



Central Station Park combines plaza space with open green areas that can accommodate larger gatherings.



A proposed new park will be designed as a dog park.

A garden could be created as part of redevelopment of the site and could be designed as part of a park space, satisfying the park dedication required with property development. The garden could also serve as an educational or demonstration site for sustainable gardening and development practices (composting, permeable pavements, recycled building materials, etc.).

Smaller scale, private urban agriculture can also occur on patios and roofs of private development. Planted (green) roofs can also function to reduce the amount of impervious surface and thereby reduce stormwater runoff and help to insulate buildings reducing the urban “heat sink” effect.

Establish a System of Inter-Connected Parks and Trails

South Loop is envisioned as a place with attractive places to relax and recreate – where residents, visitors, and employees can comfortably get around on foot or bike. Establishing this network will involve creating new parks and landscaped plazas, new trailheads to access the MVNWR, and connecting these features via an expanded pedestrian and bicycle network.

New Parks and Plazas

There are currently three public parks in South Loop: River Ridge Playground, located south of 86th Street near Trinity School; Bloomington Central Station Park, located across from the Light Rail Transit station in the heart of the planned Bloomington Central

Station neighborhood; and Forest Glen Park encompassing the ravine just southeast of the intersection of East Old Shakopee Road/Killebrew Drive and 24th Avenue. As new development occurs in South Loop, new public parks and private plazas will be created to increase the aesthetic appeal and value of adjacent properties, help manage stormwater, and become places to gather, relax, and recreate.

Proposed new parks, plazas and focal points are shown on **Figure 3.34**, page 3.64, and include:

Active Parks – Four new parks are proposed that can become central gathering places as surrounding blocks redevelop with a higher density mix of uses. These parks can provide for a range of recreation uses. The two parks proposed within residential neighborhoods should include playgrounds. One is located just north of 86th Street in an area where existing multiple family housing is anticipated to redevelop over the next 20 to 30 years. The other is located in the proposed new residential neighborhood northeast of the intersection of 34th Avenue and American Boulevard. Other new parks are shown in areas where large blocks are anticipated for future redevelopment. Locations shown on the **Figure 3.34**, page 3.64, are conceptual. Specific park locations will be determined in conjunction with private development of surrounding blocks.

Dog Park and Ravine Trailhead –

This proposed new park is located southeast of the intersection of East

Old Shakopee Road/Killebrew Drive and 24th Avenue. It will abut the existing Forest Glen Park, which encompasses a steep, wooded ravine and stream. Creation of the new park will involve consolidation of four separate parcels currently owned by the Metropolitan Airports Commission. The park will cover about one acre and will be designed as a dog park with limited picnic facilities, a small parking lot, a trailhead and a natural surface trail through the ravine and Forest Glen Park, leading into the MVNWR.

Plazas and Landscape Focal Points

– Most plazas and landscaped focal points are features of private development, although public landscaped nodes may be created at key intersections. A prominent public plaza is proposed at the intersection of 24th Avenue and Lindau Link. This plaza will function as a visual gateway to both the MOA and Lindau Link. (See **Section 3.2.2, the 24th Avenue Gateway Corridor**, pages 3.21 - 3.25.) **Figure 3.34, page 3.64**, shows three private landscaped areas planned in the BCS development.

Refuge Access and Trailheads

Currently, access into the MVNWR is provided in three locations in South Loop: the Bass Ponds access, near the intersection of East Old Shakopee Road and 86th Street, and two near the MVNWR Visitors Center located at the east end of American Boulevard. To improve access to the MVNWR, four new trailhead locations are proposed between

the three existing access points, including:

Dog Park and Ravine Trailhead –

This new park is envisioned as a dog park and trailhead, with limited picnic facilities, and a small parking lot. A proposed natural surface trail through the ravine will follow the stream through Forest Glen Park and into the MVNWR. This park is also near the east terminus of the 86th Street Bikeway, which connects to the Inter-City Regional Trail.

This new park is located near the east terminus of the existing bikeway along 86th Street, which connects to the proposed Inter-City Regional Trail route along Old Cedar Avenue.

Spruce Shadows Farm Trailhead –

When this property redevelops, 28th Avenue will be extended to provide access into the development site and a proposed new trailhead located near the bluff edge. The location of the trailhead and alignment of the connecting trail into the MVNWR will be determined in cooperation with the Refuge staff and property owner. It should be incorporated into the site redevelopment plan.

30th Avenue Trailhead – This trailhead is proposed off East Old Shakopee Road near the intersection with 30th Avenue. There is an existing service road leading into the Refuge here that could be redesigned to accommodate a pedestrian trail.

34th Avenue Trailhead – This trailhead is proposed off East Old Shakopee Road where it curves to the north to merge with 34th



MVNWR kiosk provides information about the refuge.



Improving access to the MVNWR is an important objective.

Avenue. The trailhead will provide convenient access into the MVNWR for nearby residents and employees. Like all the trailheads and connecting trail segments, locations and alignments will need to be coordinated with the Refuge staff and any affected property owners.

The City will work cooperatively with the MVNWR to ensure trailheads (kiosks, etc.) and alignment of new access trails are compatible with MVNWR plans and design standards. It is critical that trails be designed in a manner that minimizes impacts on the natural environment. Generally, trails through ravines should be natural-surfaced and designed to minimize negative impacts, such as erosion and vegetation loss. *See Figure 3.36, below, for details.*

All trailheads are proposed to include kiosks providing information about the MVNWR and trail maps. Trailheads should also include lighting, some seating, and bicycle racks. Other amenities, such as

vehicle parking, picnic shelters, and drinking fountains, may be provided where space and utilities are available.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail Network

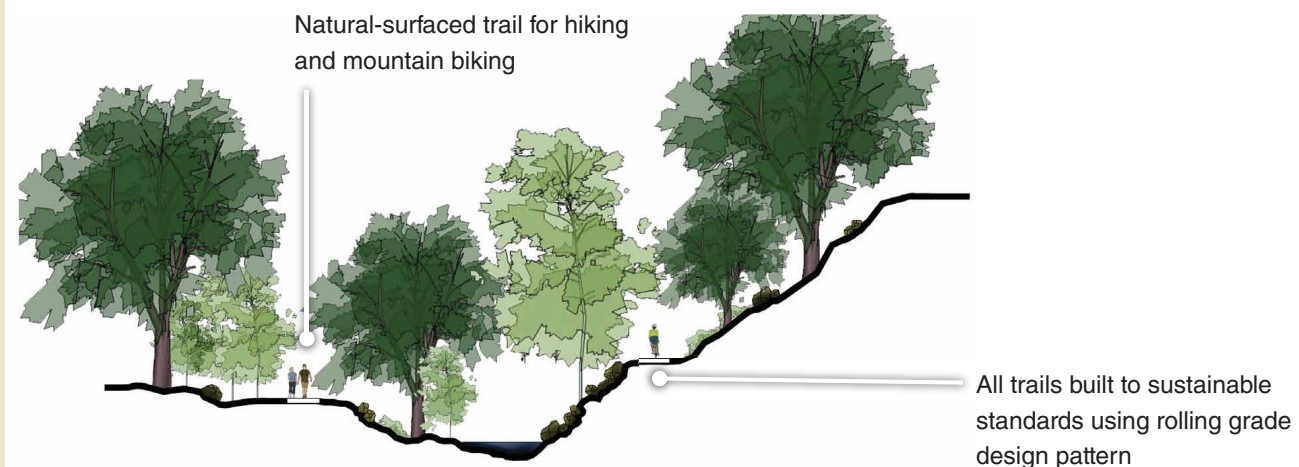
The City's *Alternative Transportation Plan (ATP)*, adopted in 2008, recommends a hierarchical network of pedestrian and bicycle routes throughout Bloomington. The pedestrian and bicycle routes proposed for South Loop correspond to the routes recommended in the ATP and should be designed in accordance with the guidelines described in that plan. *See*

Figure 3.34, page 3.64. This plan also recommends that all new or reconstructed streets in South Loop follow a multi-modal model, that incorporates transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and landscaping.

Key components of the South Loop trail network include:

Lindau Link – The proposed extension of Lindau Lane between the Mall of America (MOA) and BCS

Figure 3.36 Natural-Surfaced Trails in Greenway-Type Setting



Source: City of Bloomington, *Alternative Transportation Plan*, July 2008, page 3.39.

will provide a key east-west corridor through the heart of South Loop. It will be designed as a multi-modal street, with transit, pedestrian and bicycle amenities, and ample landscaping to give it a “greenway” character. While the segment between 24th and 28th Avenues will accommodate motor vehicles and transit, the segment through BCS, between 28th and 34th Avenues, will likely be designed for only pedestrians and bicyclists. A center median will be designed to manage stormwater.

East American Boulevard – The segment of American Boulevard east of 34th Avenue is the main access to the MVNWR Headquarters and Visitors Center. It also connects to an existing trail along the I-494 bridge across the Minnesota River, providing connections to trails in Dakota County and the east metro area. This segment of American Boulevard will be enhanced to make it more parkway-like in character by adding landscaping and improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

East-West Connectors – The primary east-west routes through South Loop include American Boulevard and East Old Shakopee Road. These provide important connections within South Loop and to other parts of Bloomington and beyond. American Boulevard, west of 34th, includes an existing off-road pedestrian/bicycle trail that extends across Bloomington and connects to the proposed Inter-City Regional Trail. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities recommended in the ATP will be

implemented on East Old Shakopee Road in conjunction with road reconstruction projects.

Another key east-west connector is 86th Street. While it does not extend through South Loop, the on-street bicycle lanes make 86th Street a key bicycle route through Bloomington. It also connects with the Inter-City Regional Trail proposed along Old Cedar Avenue that will extend north to Richfield and the Minneapolis Chain-of-Lakes, and ultimately, south to Dakota County via the Long Meadow Lake crossing. The east end of 86th Street terminates at East Old Shakopee Road near the existing Bass Ponds trailhead into the MVNWR and the proposed new park and ravine trailhead.

North-South Connectors – Most of the existing trails through South Loop have an east-west orientation. Three roads – 24th, 28th, and 30th Avenues – serve as the primary north-south connectors through South Loop. Making these roads more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, and connecting with the east-west routes can establish a complete, inter-connected trail network throughout South Loop.

Minnesota Valley State Trail

This trail was authorized in 1969 by the State Legislature to establish a continuous 72-mile trail corridor from the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers in Fort Snelling State Park to the City of Le Sueur. See **Figure 3.35**, page 3.66. In 2001 the Legislature approved the extension of the trail from Le Sueur



Complete streets are designed to accommodate multiple modes of travel, including pedestrians and bicycles.

upriver to its source at Big Stone Lake State Park. The trail is in the Minnesota Valley State Recreation Area created in 1994 and managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Division of Parks and Recreation.

In 1984, a comprehensive, multi-agency planning effort culminated in publication of the *Comprehensive Plan for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Recreation Area and State Trail*, updated in 2004. This plan sets broad guidelines for development of the trail as a multiuse corridor connecting the already established units of the state recreation area and the various units of the MVNWR. The plan designated several alternative alignments for the trail on both sides of the river. While many segments of the trail are in place, a critical gap exists through the cities of Bloomington and Eden Prairie. Efforts are underway to identify and secure an alignment for this "missing link."

Preserve Existing Cultural Resources

The bluff and adjoining Minnesota River have always played a significant role in the settlement of Bloomington; providing food, shelter, fuel, and transportation. Prehistoric mounds found on the bluff and in the floodplain provide evidence of human settlement dating back several thousand years. Prehistoric habitation of the area focuses on Woodland and Mississippian period cultures. Prior to 1852, the bluff and river bottoms were settled by the

Mdewakanton Dakota (commonly referred to as the Dakota or Sioux).

Native American Burial Mounds

An archaeological survey conducted in 1880 and reported in 1911 in N.H. Winchell's *The Aborigines of Minnesota*, identified fifteen mound groups in Bloomington. A follow up archeological survey conducted by the Minnesota Historical Society in 1972 found that all but five of the mound groups identified by Winchell had been destroyed. Loss of burial mounds can be attributed to agricultural activities (plowing, cultivating, grazing), land development activities (grading and clearing), natural erosion, and creek or river re-channelization. The remaining burial mounds are protected by Minnesota regulations.

Partners

The City partners with several other governmental agencies in matters related to parks, trails, and natural resources. Primary partners include:



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR)

The MVNWR is part of the national wildlife refuge system managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. One of only five urban refuges in the U.S., the MVNWR was established in 1976 to provide habitat for

migratory waterfowl, fish, and other wildlife species threatened by commercial and industrial development. Management focuses on restoring wetlands, grasslands, and oak savannas, enhancing aquatic plant diversity through water level management, grassland management, exotic species control, and water quality monitoring.

Maintaining a close working partnership with MVNWR staff is essential to ensure that urban development in South Loop does not impact the sensitive resources and habitat in the MVNWR.

www.fws.gov/midwest/MinnesotaValley/index.html



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

The mission of the DNR is to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life. The DNR manages the Minnesota Valley Trail.

www.dnr.state.mn.us/index.html



Three Rivers Park District

The Three Rivers Park District is an independent, special park district

charged with acquiring, developing and maintaining large park reserves and regional parks and trails in the west suburban metropolitan area. It is one of ten implementing agencies of the Metropolitan Regional Park System, established in 1974.

www.threeriversparks.org

Watershed Districts

All development must manage stormwater in compliance with the City's *Surface Water Management Plan*. This plan is intended to meet the requirements for a local watershed management plan, as required by various district, metropolitan and state organizations. South Loop is under the jurisdiction of the following two watershed management districts:

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD) - The LMRWD,

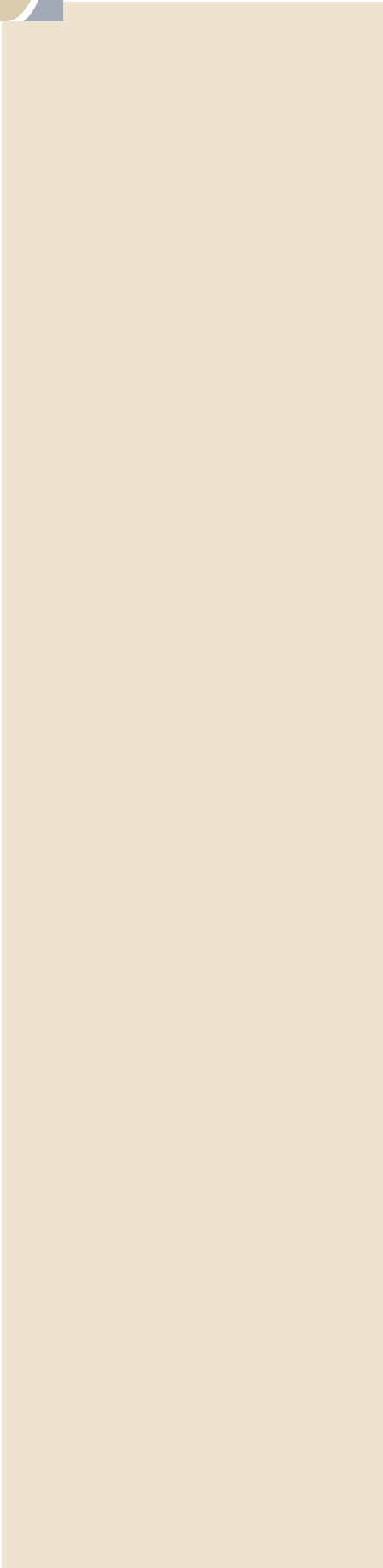
organized in 1960, encompasses 64-square miles of the Minnesota River Valley, eastward from Carver, Minnesota, to the confluence with the Mississippi River at historic Fort Snelling, near the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

www.watershreddistrict.org

Richfield-Bloomington Watershed Management Organization (RBWMO) – The RBWMO, formed in

1983, covers an area of 7.55 square miles, with 3.3 square miles (43 percent) located in Bloomington.

www.rbwmo.com





Section 3

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

3.3 Framework Components (continued)

Section 3.3.4: Utility Framework

The utility infrastructure in South Loop consists of sanitary sewer, potable water, and storm sewer systems, as well as energy and telecommunication systems. South Loop is served by public and private utility systems. The majority of the public utility infrastructure is sufficient to accommodate current demands.

Utility upgrades are typically done in conjunction with new development or redevelopment, with new road construction, or as part of the City's ongoing utility maintenance schedule. Utilities needed to serve new development will be located to coincide with the proposed fine-grain street network. The *Implementation Plan, Table 5.3, page 5.6*, identifies potential funding for these improvements.

Public Utilities

Sanitary Sewer

The sanitary sewer system in South Loop, *Figure 3.37, page 3.76*, has been upgraded to address deficiencies identified in the *1998 Sanitary Sewer Policy Plan* and the *2002 Alternative Urban Area Review (AUAR)*. To serve increased flows from projected future development in South Loop, additional improvements will be needed to ensure adequate capacity.

Hydraulic modeling and capacity analysis conducted for year 2030 and 2050 forecast development indicate that 35 to 67 pipe segments will exceed capacity, respectively. Pipe segments with critical flows for 2030 and 2050 are located in the same general area. *See Figure 3.38, page 3.77*. Therefore, needed system upgrades are to be done in conjunction with road improvement and maintenance projects to serve forecast 2050 development volumes and minimize reconstruction and restoration costs.

Determination of needed system upgrades will be based on the City's Utility Asset Management policies, which examine condition, performance, reliability, and criticality issues. Pipes are considered critical where modeled flow depths exceed 75 percent of the pipe diameter. Utilities staff will conduct close analysis to determine what, or if, system upgrades are necessary.

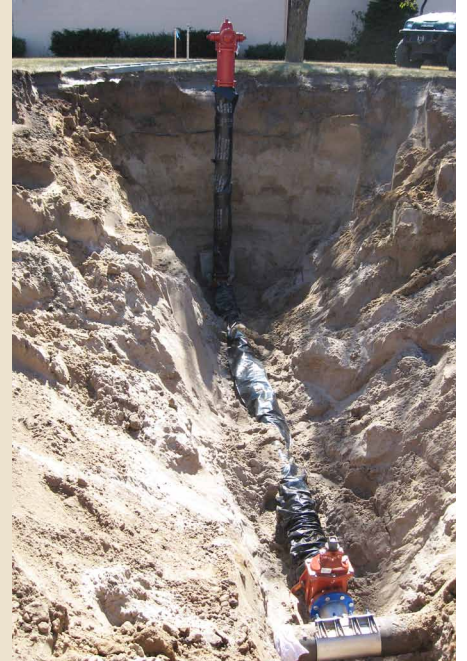
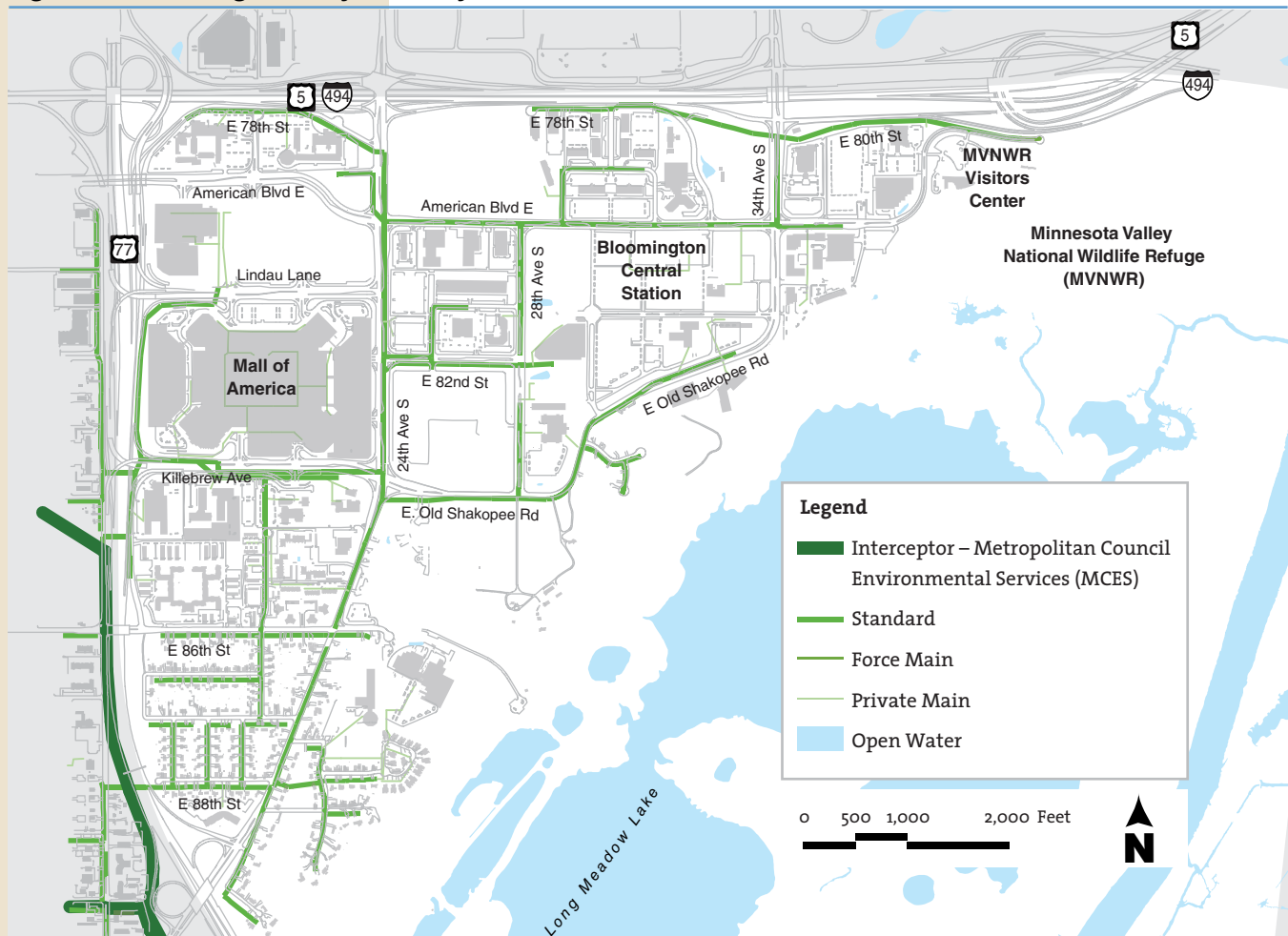


Figure 3.37 Existing Sanitary Sewer System



Source: Bloomington Utilities Division, 2012.

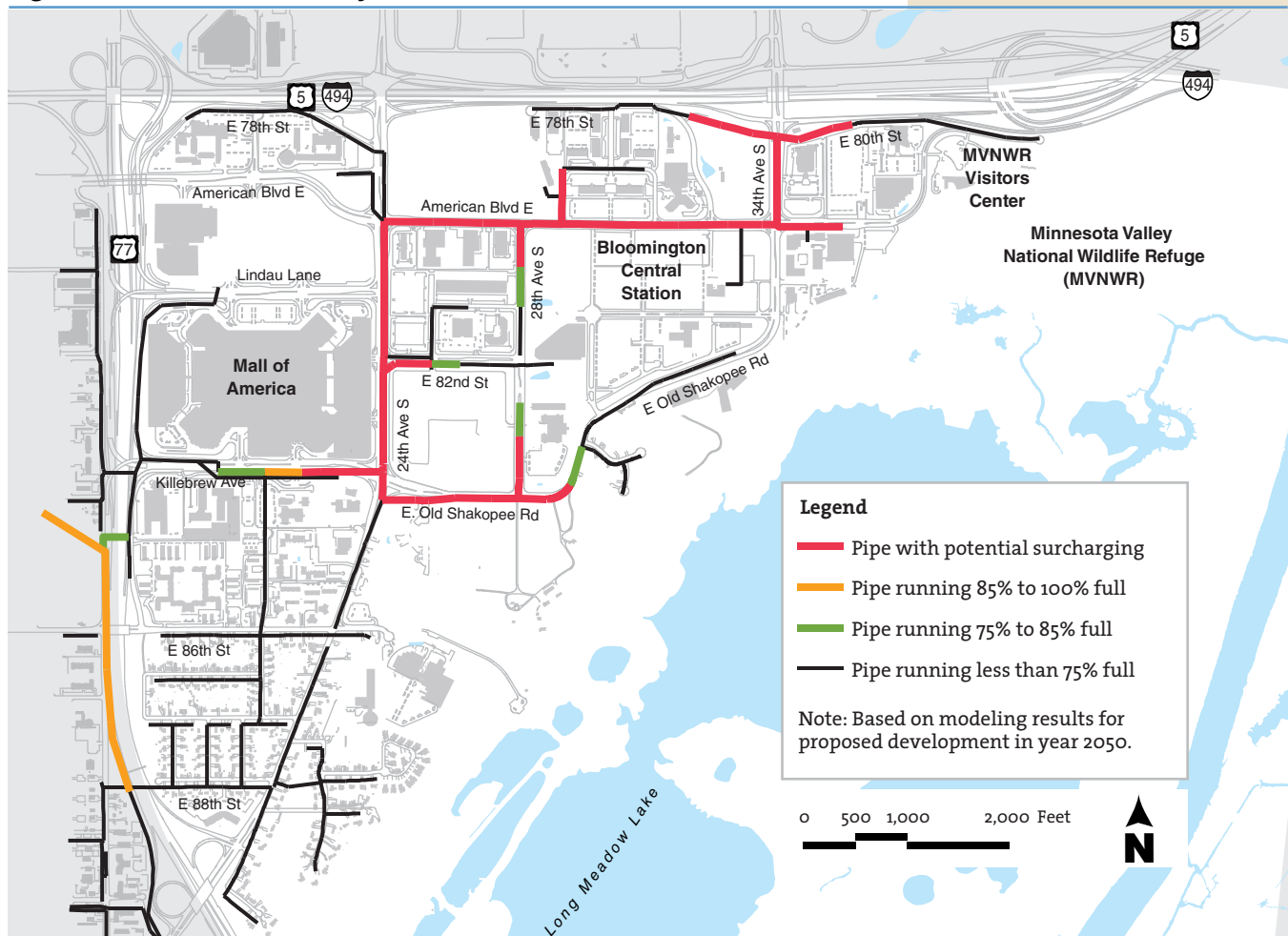
Because most of the pipes identified by the model as critical are trunk sewer lines that convey sewer flows from all over the South Loop District, determining the need for additional system capacity and covering the costs to provide it should be based on a District approach. The City is in the process of developing a fair-share cost allocation process to fund necessary system upgrades. It is anticipated that cost allocation will be based on the City's current development/flow generation forecasts. In some cases, cost collection will be delayed until the

system upgrades are implemented or district development approaches forecast levels.

Potable Water

Bloomington's public water supply is drawn from six deep wells extending to the Jordan and Mount Simon bedrock aquifers. To prevent pollution of these aquifers, the City established wellhead protection areas in accordance with state law. The City's well field is located at the water treatment plant at West 90th Street and Normandale Boulevard. None of the South Loop District

Figure 3.38 Potential Sanitary Sewer Constraints



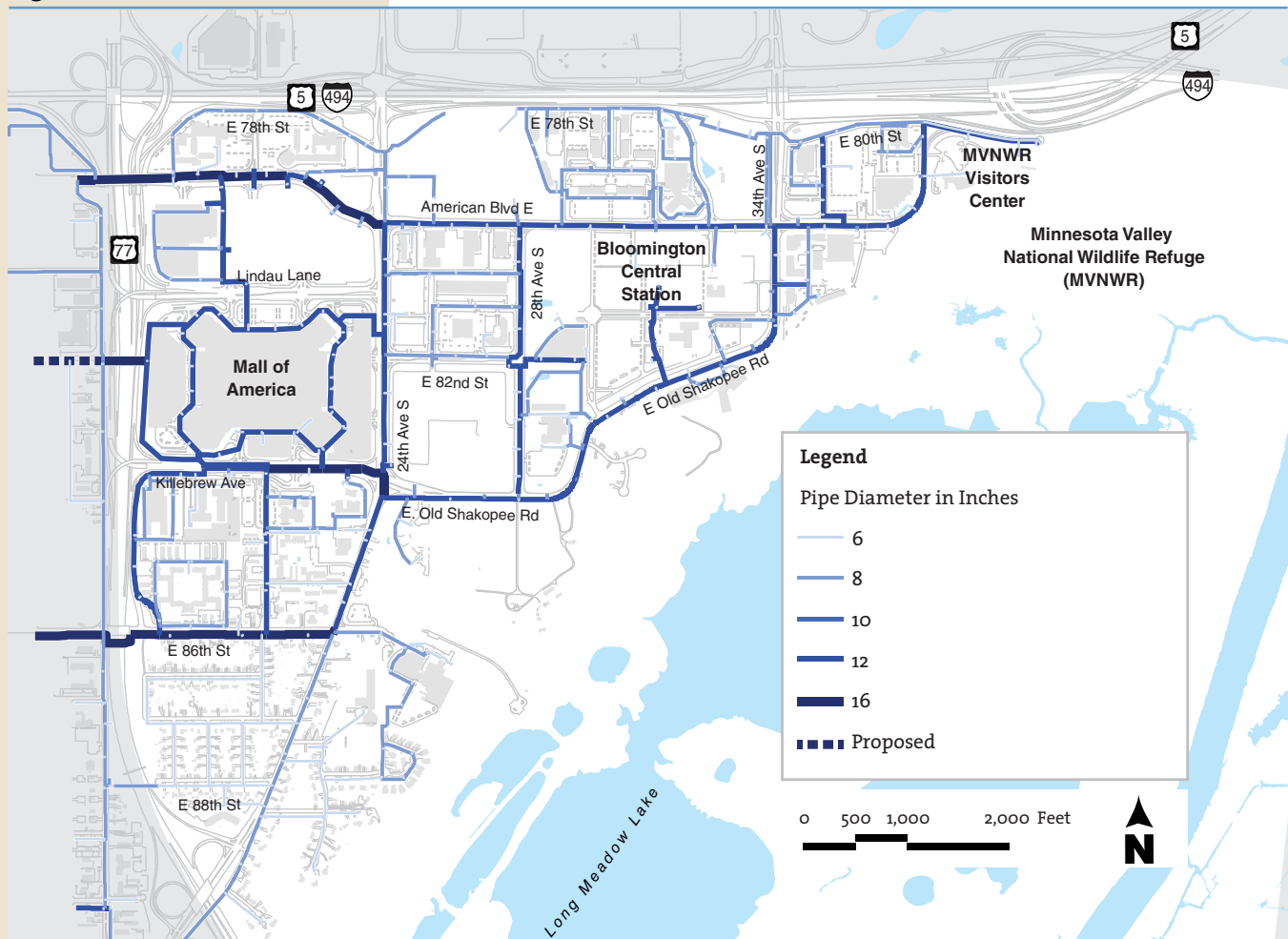
Source: Bloomington Utilities Division, 2012.

is located within the wellhead protection area.

The City's water distribution system, **Figure 3.39**, page 3.78, has adequate capacity to accommodate existing and projected future development in South Loop. If needed, Bloomington can also draw up to 30 million gallons per day (MGD) from the city of Minneapolis. It is recommended that the existing 12-inch water main on 82nd Street between 12th Avenue and TH 77 (just west of the District) be upsized to 16 inches. This upgrade will enhance flow to the Mall of

America Phase II site and South Loop as a whole. Analysis of the water transmissions system capacity was conducted for the Bloomington 2010 *Water System Master Plan*.

Figure 3.39 Watermain



Source: Bloomington Utilities Division, 2012.



The goal of stormwater management is to remove 80 percent of total suspended solids (TSS) and phosphorus from runoff prior to water going off-site.

Stormwater Management

Managing stormwater runoff in developed areas is required to mitigate potential impacts on groundwater, downstream surface water bodies and wetlands. It is also essential to protect natural resources along the bluff and in the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR). The primary receiving bodies of water are Long Meadow Lake and the Minnesota River and its associate wetlands.

To protect these waters from degradation, stormwater

management focuses on three key objectives:

1. Reduce the **quantity of water** that runs off development sites.
2. Control the peak **flow rates** of runoff.
3. Improve **water quality** prior to off-site discharge.

Reducing Quantity and Flow Rate

The *Bloomington Comprehensive Surface Water Management Plan* (CSWMP) requires that surface water discharge rates be controlled from new development and

redevelopment that disturbs one acre or more of land. While pipes and ponds can collect and retain the runoff, current objectives are to minimize the amount of stormwater that runs off a development site and slow down its rate of discharge. Low-impact development (LID) techniques increase on-site stormwater infiltration and retention to reduce the volume and slow down the rate of discharge from development sites, and ultimately, reduce the amount of stormwater discharge into the Minnesota River.

Improving Water Quality

Stormwater run-off from developed areas often comes from “dirty” surfaces such as rooftops, streets and parking lots. Filtering out pollutants prior to discharge into the Minnesota River is the goal. Water quality treatment at all development sites must meet the City’s *Comprehensive Surface Water Management Plan* requirement to maintain or improve the water quality. Development sites must also be in conformance with Lower Minnesota River Watershed District or Richfield-Bloomington Watershed Management Organization requirements. A green infrastructure approach can be effective in attaining water quality standards.

Sustainable Stormwater Management

Managing stormwater in a sustainable manner is a key objective in making South Loop a model of sustainable development. The overall goal is to manage

stormwater runoff from developed areas in a manner that comes as close to pre-development conditions as feasible. As development occurs, the amount of pervious surface area, where precipitation can naturally infiltrate, decreases. Under pre-development conditions, approximately 10 percent of precipitation runs off the land. Currently in South Loop, about 403 acres (56 percent) of the developed urban area above the bluff are impervious, resulting in approximately 85 percent of precipitation becoming runoff.

South Loop stormwater drains to the Long Meadow Lake wetland network and the Minnesota River. The goal is to minimize the amount of runoff and remove pollutants from the water prior to it reaching Long Meadow Lake and the Minnesota River. To do that, a sustainable approach to stormwater management based on green infrastructure must be implemented to preserve, restore, and enhance natural resources with site, infrastructure, and architectural design.

Conventional “pipe and pond” infrastructure approaches move stormwater from one area to another, often without providing the highest level of stormwater treatment. A sustainable stormwater management approach utilizes green infrastructure and LID techniques that focus on a “slow-spread-soak” approach based on the characteristics of the watershed (e.g., soils, topography, vegetation cover).



Bioswales within a parking lot help collect and filter runoff.



Planted “green roofs” increase the amount of pervious surface on a development site.



A rain garden/infiltration trench demonstrates sustainable stormwater management.

Low Impact Development (LID) and Best Management Practices (BMPs)

LID and BMPs form the core of the sustainable stormwater management approach in South Loop. These sometimes overlapping approaches will be used along with more conventional infrastructure components (e.g., pipes and ponds) to achieve the quantity, rate, and water quality objectives stated above.

LID is an ecologically based approach that favors landscape techniques to manage stormwater over mechanical or structural approaches, such as pipes, catch basins, curbs and gutters. The LID “slow-spread-soak” approach involves a variety of techniques ranging from mechanical (pipes) to biological (constructed wetlands). This approach and associated techniques are described below.

Slowing involves controlling the flow of runoff, detention to reduce peak flow rates, and retention to allow sedimentation of suspended solids.

- Oversized pipes.
- Flow control devices.
- Dry swales.
- Underground detention.
- Detention ponds (where allowed in South Loop).
- Wet vaults.
- Rainwater harvesting.
- Retention ponds.

Spreading involves filtering runoff to remove sediments and infiltration to recharge the groundwater.

- Filter strips.
- Underground sand filters.
- Surface sand filters.

- Vegetated walls.
- Vegetated roofs (aka “green roofs”).
- Pervious pavement.
- Infiltration trenches.
- Tree box filters.
- Rain gardens.
- Riparian buffers.

Soaking involves treatment to improve water quality by removing or metabolizing contaminants in the runoff.

- Bioswales.
- Infiltration basins.
- Constructed wetlands.

These techniques will be incorporated into the proposed network of public parks, green medians, rain gardens, and open spaces in South Loop. LID stormwater management techniques will also need to be included as site design features of private development. Many of these can become attractive landscape features while providing stormwater management functions.

BMPs are techniques found to be most effective and practical in achieving desired outcomes, such as reducing erosion. Examples of stormwater BMPs that may be implemented in South Loop include:

- **On-site retention** that is used in some watershed districts, but not those in South Loop, currently require on-site retention of the first inch of runoff over impervious surfaces. Implementation of this requirement should be evaluated based on its potential effect on development costs, the site characteristics, and whether detention BMPs would be allowed.

- **Street sweeping** is one of several maintenance related Best Management Practices (BMPs) that can greatly reduce the pollutants entering the stormwater management system. It has the added benefit of keeping the streets clean and attractive. It is recommended that the City study the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of implementing an aggressive monthly or bi-monthly street sweeping program in South Loop. The cost of this additional maintenance could be covered in a revised storm utility fee structure or as a part of a business improvement district.

- **Stream bank and bluff protection** is critical to maintain and restore the bluff edge and steep-sided ravines that form the south and east border of South Loop. These ecologically sensitive areas are vulnerable to erosion from uncontrolled overland flows or point source stormwater discharge. Existing Bluff Protection and Floodplain regulations should be evaluated to ensure preservation of these areas. The Lower Minnesota River Watershed District has completed a gully inventory. Appropriate restoration projects should be supported to minimize erosion and sedimentation impacts.

- **Disconnecting impervious surfaces from stormwater inlets** will allow more runoff to infiltrate or soak into pervious areas, reduce runoff volume, recharge groundwater resources, reduce peak runoff rates, and reduce stormwater pollutant loading. Existing untreated

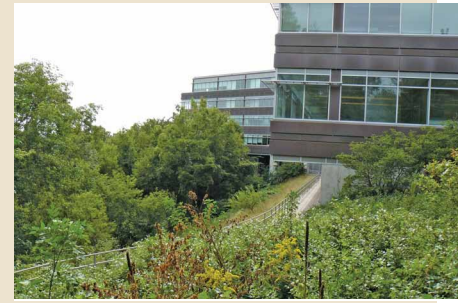
surfaces that discharge to the bluff and/or Long Meadow Lake should be eliminated or treated prior to discharge. The Ceridian/Long Meadow Circle outfall is partially treated, however, and the existing corrugated metal pipe is scheduled to be replaced.

City Stormwater Infrastructure

The existing stormwater infrastructure system consists of pipes, storage (retention and detention) ponds, and structural BMPs used to treat the runoff water prior to discharge. The network of pipes collects runoff from developed sites, roads, and other impervious surfaces and conveys it to a series of ponds. The ponds hold the water, allowing removal of phosphorus and total suspended solids (TSS) to occur, as well as control the rate of discharge to downstream water bodies. *See Figure 3.40, page 3.82.*

Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Zoning regulations and the City's Airport Runway Overlay Districts restrict open water ponds above the Minnesota River bluff 800-foot elevation. The purpose of these regulations is to eliminate wildlife attractants and reduce the potential for bird strikes in the area of airport operations.

New development will need to connect to the existing stormwater system based on what on-site stormwater management approach is taken. Future system upgrades will mostly involve ponds and other BMPs, as described below.

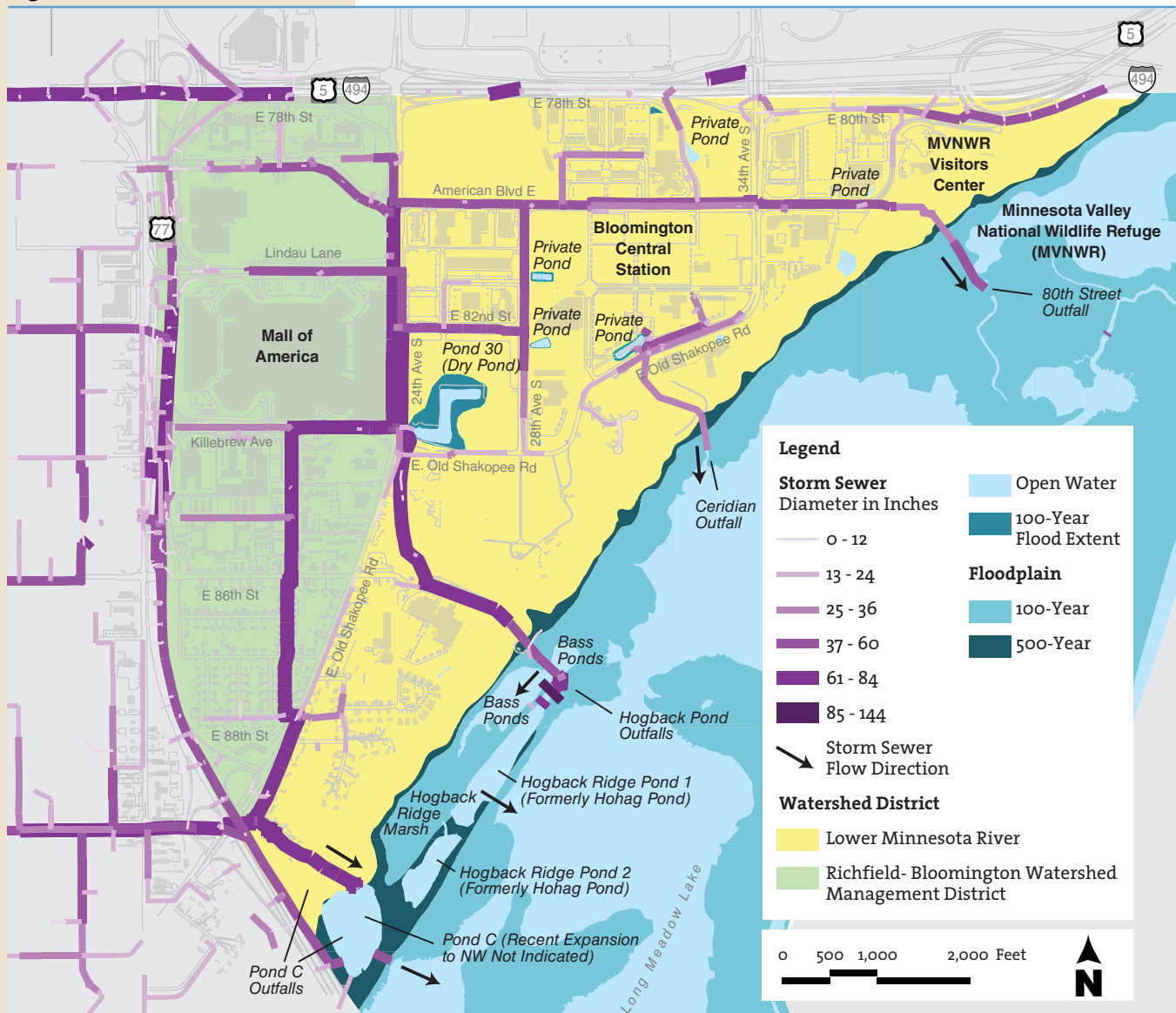


Development abutting the bluff must not encroach on the steep-wooded slopes.



Pond C is the main regional treatment pond serving South Loop.

Figure 3.40 Stormwater Features



Source: Bloomington Utilities Division, 2012.

Regional Ponding

Given the restriction on ponds and open water, regional ponds located below the bluff, play an important role in retention and treatment of stormwater in South Loop. The main regional treatment pond currently serving South Loop is Pond C, located just east of the TH 77 Bridge. Construction of additional regional ponds to serve South Loop will need to be assessed in relationship

to the needs of new development. However, regional ponds cannot serve all of South Loop cost effectively. Some areas, particularly the northeast portion of South Loop, will need to manage all, or most of their stormwater through on-site treatment.

Pond 30

This private pond was constructed as a temporary rate control pond

for the parking lot on the parcels located just east of 24th Avenue, between 82nd Street and East Old Shakopee Road. It provides a great deal of infiltration and is normally dry. Replacement of this private pond will require careful attention to current flow conditions during site redevelopment because open water is not allowed in this area.

Water Quality Wetlands

Upgrading existing wetlands to provide stormwater management functions and natural resource improvements would accomplish multiple objectives.

Forest Glen Stream

Also known as Ike's Creek, this stream flows through a major ravine in Forest Glen Park before entering the MVNWR. While the stream does not serve as a stormwater outfall, it is a unique natural area and its high-quality water sustains watercress and trout. An inventory of the area should be undertaken and a management plan prepared that considers possible impacts from development of adjoining properties on the natural resources of the ravine. In addition, a sustainable trail is proposed through the ravine that will connect a new trailhead and park at the top of the ravine to the MVNWR.

Private Utilities

Private utility companies provide certain utilities, particularly energy and communications. The primary private utilities serving South Loop include: Xcel Energy (electric power) and CenterPoint Energy (natural

gas). There are numerous phone, cable and Internet service providers operating in South Loop. The largest and most common are: Comcast and CenturyLink (formerly Qwest).

Energy Systems

With rising concerns about climate change and energy costs, interest in alternative, clean, renewable energy generation has grown in recent years. The amount of new development projected for South Loop make it a potential candidate for implementation of the alternative energy systems described below, particularly those designed for large-scale application.

District Energy

District energy systems produce heating or cooling for the built environment in a centralized location that is then distributed to multiple users or buildings. District energy systems provide higher efficiencies and better pollution control than dispersed heating and cooling systems. Cogeneration, a form of district energy, employs the utilization of waste energy from the electricity generation process to fuel district energy systems, and can further increase the efficiency of district energy.

A feasibility study was conducted in 2010-11 to determine the cost-effectiveness of developing a district energy system to serve South Loop. The study makes recommendations regarding fuel sources, location of facilities (plant, distribution pipes, etc.,) and system configuration (e.g., energy islands). It also outlines steps



This stream – known for its high quality water – runs through Forest Glen Park and extends into the MVNWR.



An electric vehicle uses an on-street charging station.



Photo voltaic panels provide active solar energy generation.

for a private company to implement the system. If deemed feasible, the City or Port Authority may be a partner in financing such a system or issue a Request for Proposal to select a district energy provider. Three options were studied:

1. Utilizing the Xcel Black Dog Power Plant to supply steam;
2. Constructing a cogeneration facility on Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) property, serving South Loop with the excess energy; and
3. Constructing a natural gas fueled energy facility at or near Bloomington Central Station.

Any of these options will require coordination and partnering with multiple parties such as CenterPoint Energy, Xcel Energy, MAC, and local businesses, among others. If a district energy system is to be built, the decision to invest in district energy should be made before significant development occurs. This allows maximum flexibility in locating the district energy infrastructure. In South Loop, distribution pipes would be located to follow the proposed street grid. Implementation would occur with new street construction. District energy facilities may be located within or adjacent to parking ramps.

Smart Grid

A Smart Grid is a type of electrical grid that attempts to predict and respond to the behavior and actions of all electric power users connected to it to more efficiently deliver reliable, economic, and

sustainable electrical power. Smart grid technologies emerged from earlier use of electronic controls, metering, and monitoring that track how electricity is used at different times. In a Smart Grid, buildings are equipped with “smart meters” that allow energy use to be monitored in real time. Energy suppliers may charge variable electric rates to reflect peak and off-peak generation costs. Electricity consumers can then choose to consume electricity when rates are lower. Satellite energy suppliers (e.g., residential solar array or wind generator) may sell energy back to the grid. Smart Grids could also allow electric vehicles, charged at night when power is cheaper, to supply the grid during the daytime peaks.

Solar Energy

This involves converting solar radiation into electricity or heat. Solar technology is generally characterized as passive or active. Active solar techniques use photovoltaic panels, solar-thermal panels, pumps, and fans to convert solar radiation into useable energy. These approaches increase the energy supply. Passive solar techniques include a range of applications such as the use of materials that deflect or retain heat, use of natural ventilation and air circulation, and positioning buildings or landscaping relative to the position of the sun. While passive techniques do not increase energy supply, they reduce the need and demand for other energy resources.

Photovoltaic panels are the most common active solar technique used in development. Technological improvements have created panels that are smaller, more efficient, and more versatile, allowing a wide range of uses from roof-mounted panels, to integration with building siding materials, to use in appurtenances such as streetlights and parking meters. Common passive techniques include: southern orientation of buildings, use of high albedo (light reflecting) materials and light colors, use of overhangs to selectively shade buildings, specific placement of landscaping to maximize summer shade, and winter sun access.

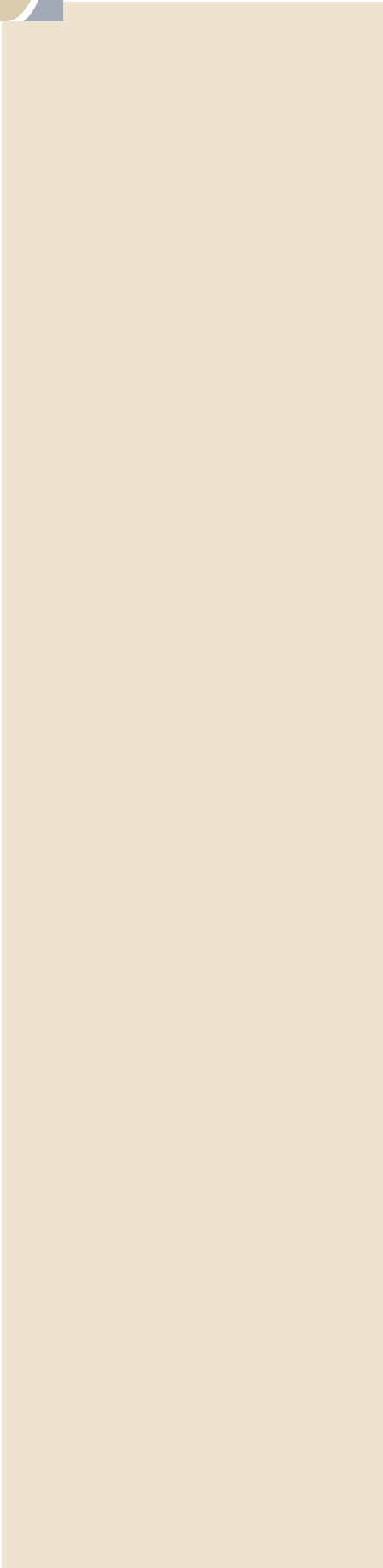
Wind Energy

In an urban setting, small wind turbines are used on individual buildings or sites to produce electricity from wind. As a source of renewable, alternative energy, wind energy can be used to reduce reliance on electricity from the grid or other, more conventional energy sources. Technological advances have made small wind turbines quieter, more reliable, and better able to blend into developed areas. However, wind turbines must be fairly tall to have unobstructed access to wind, which can limit their application in urban settings, particularly residential areas.

Photo credit: Great River Energy



Wind turbines are sources of renewable, alternative energy.





Section 4

PLACEMAKING AND COMMUNICATION

Many of the development initiatives for the South Loop District are intended to transform the District's densities and character from suburban to urban and to establish and promote the District as a branded place emphasizing sustainability, quality, safety, and comfort. More specifically, South Loop is envisioned as a place where people come to explore, gather and linger in an environment that invites walking and street level activity. Ideally, it will be a place with a distinct identity and character where people choose to work, play, and live.

4.1 Name and Brand Identity

For many years, the portion of Bloomington east of TH 77 was referred to as the "Airport South District," although that was never intended as its permanent name. With planning efforts underway to transform the District into a sustainable, mixed-use neighborhood, the time was right to find a more relevant and captivating name.

In early 2009 the City embarked on a process to create a new name and brand identity to help distinguish the District as neighborhood and destination noted for quality, sustainability and accessibility. A task force of City staff and key stakeholders was formed to work with Bolin Marketing to rename and rebrand the District.

Initial efforts resulted in the identification of four terms that characterized the District's brand essence: *Confluence. Balance. Vibrant. Possibilities/Gateway.* The preferred brand message was "**Life. Uncompromised.**"

Finding a New Home

The task force reviewed dozens of alternative names and logos. Input was also received from a survey of residents, businesses and other organizations with ties to the District. The City Council ultimately approved the name "**South Loop District,**" which refers to the southerly terminus of the Hiawatha Light Rail Line that runs to the North Loop warehouse/riverfront area in downtown Minneapolis. Survey respondents noted that the name was "simple, urban, current, energetic and suggested a bustling, transportation-oriented Twin Cities district."

Credit: Big Stock Photos



Life. Uncompromised.

A unique confluence of business, shopping and entertainment.

Where walking the nation's largest indoor mall meets walking the Minnesota River bluffs.

Where an urban experience meets a neighborhood feel.

Where local meets global and excitement meets serenity.



Logo

Once a name was selected, Bolin Marketing prepared several logo concepts, which were reviewed by the task force and approved by the City Council. The logo is evocative of the geography of South Loop and mimics the color scheme used in the City of Bloomington logo. The logo will be used in articles and videos about South Loop, on the City's website, and in presentations and print material for marketing as well as general informational purposes.

Ultimately, the logo will be incorporated into directional and wayfinding signs and other public improvements in the District. The City will also work with private property owners, developers, and partners such as the Bloomington Chamber of Commerce and Bloomington Convention & Visitors Bureau to incorporate the logo into promotional and advertising products.

4.2 Creative Placemaking

Creating a distinctive and appealing sense of place within the South Loop District will depend in part on providing public spaces and amenities that make the District aesthetically compelling and animated. These amenities include permanent and temporary public art, public spaces that invite and facilitate activity, and other unique physical features that distinguish the District. Creative placemaking can range from events, activities and temporary art pieces to permanent integration of art into streetscapes, parks, and buildings. One of the primary objectives of creative placemaking is to provide opportunities for discovery and delight that will create a lasting impression of South Loop.

There is growing research and practice around the role of creative placemaking in economic development, particularly in regard to attracting and retaining entrepreneurs, skilled workers, and residents. Many municipalities in our region and across the country have used creative placemaking to define and establish priorities for developing amenities and supporting activities that contribute to making interesting public spaces in their communities.

Common elements of successful creative placemaking include:

- Partnerships and collaboration with the existing arts and cultural community.
- Private sector support and buy in.
- Integration with existing governmental agency procedures and systems (e.g., routine infrastructure improvements, such as sidewalk replacement.)

- Assembling adequate financing.
- Clearing regulatory hurdles.
- Ensuring maintenance and sustainability.

The City of Bloomington does not have extensive experience in commissioning public art or incorporating placemaking into

public infrastructure projects. However, the South Loop District provides an opportunity to devise and implement innovative policies and procedures that explicitly integrate placemaking into public and private development throughout the District.



Creative placemaking involves using art to add value and life to infrastructure, drive vibrancy, and increase activity and value in a place.

4.3 Marketing Plan

A detailed marketing and communications plan defining target audiences, marketing touchpoints, and budget for promoting the District was developed. The plan's objectives include:

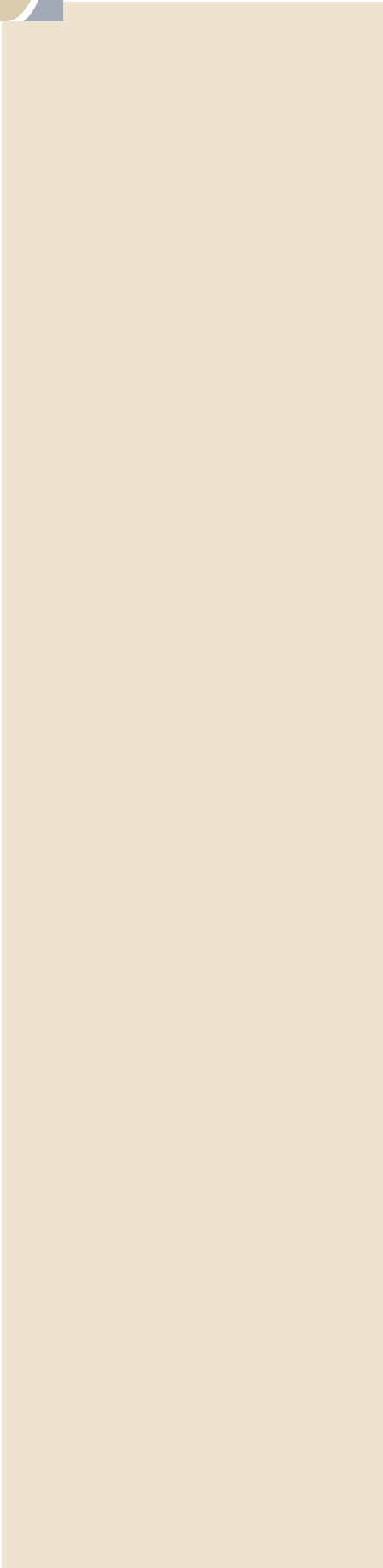
- Building awareness of South Loop;
- Conveying a vision for its future;
- Creating a sense of place that will build excitement and anticipation for South Loop development; and
- Integrating South Loop into greater Bloomington.

The intent of the various marketing tasks is to position South Loop as a unique, pedestrian-oriented, urban density district unmatched in the metro area. Tactics include viral marketing, social media, advertising and word of mouth. Long-term funding sources are identified in the implementation section as well as a coordinating entity for South Loop's marketing and brand-building efforts.

The marketing plan also discusses our partners' roles in branding and

promoting South Loop. Marketing efforts will take place over three phases, tracking the development of the area. The first phase, the pre-development stage, will target developers and brokers, employers, future residents and the general public. The plan will later be adjusted to accommodate marketing and communications needs generated by active development in South Loop.







Section 5

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

For any planning document to be effective, clear steps and actions must be proposed to implement the plan recommendations. This chapter of the *South Loop District Plan* summarizes the key recommendations described in the **Signature Elements, Section 3.2, pages 3.13-3.36**, and **Development Framework, Section 3.3, pages 3.37-3.86**, and outlines an implementation phasing and general funding strategy.

This plan has a long-term focus with a 40-year planning horizon. While several of the plan recommendations are intended to be implemented in the near future to start the physical transformation of South Loop to a walkable suburban center, others will not be implemented for 20 years or more. This chapter organizes the recommended public improvement projects into short, mid-term, and long-term time frames.

Christopher Leinberger, author of *The Option of Urbanism, Investing in a New American Dream*, advises that getting the right infrastructure installed to establish a suburban walkable district is a three-step process.

- The first step, transit connections, is substantially in place in the South Loop. This plan addresses adding transit connections to additional destinations and enhancing the experience for transit passengers – to make transit an easy choice.
- The second step involves creating zoning districts around the transit stations that will allow for greater density and mixed use development. Some of this zoning has already been accomplished by application of the High-Intensity Mixed Use with Residential District (HX-R) in the area around the intersection of 34th Avenue and American Boulevard, which includes Bloomington Central Station (BCS). Other zoning modifications are in the short-term implementation plan.
- The third step is to implement and manage improvements. This chapter details the infrastructure needed to implement this plan.



Metro Transit's 28th Avenue Park & Ride ramp opened in 2008.

5.1 Summary of Plan Recommendations

Public resources will be primarily used to offset the extraordinary costs of higher-density, mixed-use, transit-oriented development by investing in structured parking and related transportation and placemaking

infrastructure. The recommended improvements described in the *Signature Elements, Section 3.2, pages 3.13-3.36*, and *Development Framework, Section 3.3, pages 3.37-3.86*, are summarized in **Table 5.1, pages 5.2-5.4**. The anticipated time frame and the estimated cost have been identified for each action. The total estimated cost for short-term improvements through 2019 is approximately \$85 million. This amount is in addition to on-site public parking ramps and related improvements related to Mall of America (MOA) and BCS. Funding for implementation of the mid-term and long-term improvements is speculative given the extended time frame. Specific cost estimates and funding sources for mid-term and long-term improvements will be identified in future years in conjunction with proposed private developments, the City's capital improvement budget process, and *District Plan* updates.

Table 5.1 Summary of Proposed Public Improvements in the South Loop District

Public Improvement	Category ¹	Timing ²	Initial Cost in 2011 Dollars	Annual Maintenance Cost in 2011 Dollars
Roadway				
<i>Transportation Utility Study</i> – Determine how to fund street infrastructure for portions of project where development hasn't occurred	S	ST	\$50,000	
Local ITS (intelligent roadway systems) – Electronic wayfinding signage on local roads	C	ST	\$2,200,000	\$25,000
34th Avenue/ I-494 – Construct diverging diamond interchange	C	ST	\$6,000,000	\$5,000
TH 77/Lindau/IKEA Way – Nordstrom Safety Improvement	C	ST	\$1,500,000	\$2,500
Lindau Link – Construct Lindau Lane from 24th to 30th Avenues	C	ST	\$11,000,000	\$40,000
Lindau Lane lowering – Lower road from TH 77 to 24th Avenue for Mall of America II	C	ST	\$32,000,000	\$10,000
30th Avenue – Rebuild from American Boulevard to E. Old Shakopee Road	C	ST	\$4,000,000	\$10,000
Thunderbird Road/I-494 – New access in/out	C	MT	\$7,000,000	\$500
28th Avenue – Add on-street parking and green infrastructure	C	MT	\$1,000,000	\$10,000
Street grid network and associated Complete Street improvements	C	OG		
Transit				
MOA Transit Station – Expand bus capacity and bring station 'out'	C	ST	\$6,000,000	\$ –
Transit signal priority for Bus Rapid Transit	C	ST	\$75,000	\$5,000
Identify bus layover area	O	MT		\$ –
Enhanced transit stops throughout District	C	OG	\$2,000,000	\$ –
Sanitary Sewer				
<i>Sanitary Sewer Cost Apportionment Study</i>	S	ST	\$50,000	NA ³
Improvements as noted in <i>Sewer Master Plan 2010</i>	C	MT	\$ 12,757,500	\$ –

Table 5.1 Summary of Proposed Public Improvements in the South Loop District *continued*

Public Improvement	Category ¹		Timing ²		Initial Cost in 2011 Dollars	Annual Maintenance Cost in 2011 Dollars
Water Distribution System						
Water Distribution System Cost Apportionment Study	S	ST			\$10,000	NA
Trunk water main – 82nd Street from 13th Avenue to TH 77	C		MT		\$1,200,000	
Stormwater Management						
Street sweeping – Institute bimonthly sweeping as BMP (best management practice), added aesthetic benefit	P	ST			\$250,000	\$20,000
Support U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife (USFW)/Minnesota Department of Natural Resources study of Bass Ponds stormwater wetlands	S		MT		\$75,000	\$ –
Long Meadow Circle outfall – Reline pipe and install basin and energy dissipation	C		MT		\$250,000	\$1,000
Promote infiltration BMPs on public and private sites	P		OG			\$ –
Pedestrian and Trail						
Pedestrian bridge over Killebrew Drive at 21st Avenue through Radisson Blu Hotel ramp	C	ST			\$3,900,000	\$25,000
Increased level of service for sidewalk snow clearing in walkable areas	P		OG			\$35,000
Convert street lights to energy-efficient, pedestrian-scale lighting	C		MT		\$450,000	\$(75,000)
Minnesota River State Trail	C		MT		\$4,000,000	\$ –
Refuge Trail – Continue to work with USFW to expand trail system	C		OG		\$250,000	\$5,000
Trailhead at 34th Avenue and East Old Shakopee Road with connection trail to below bluff	C		MT		\$250,000	\$5,000
Pedestrian bridge over 34th Avenue at East 78th Street	C			LT	\$3,500,000	\$25,000
Refuge trailheads – Four entrance kiosks and connecting trails leading into Minnesota Valley Natural Wildlife Refuge	C		OG		\$1,000,000	\$20,000
Parks and Placemaking						
24th Avenue at Lindau Lane – Streetscape, public art, gathering area/plaza	C	ST			\$500,000	\$15,000
24th Avenue at E. 82 Street – Streetscape, public art, gathering area/plaza	C	ST			\$250,000	\$7,500
Park, trailhead, and trail near Ike’s Creek	C	ST			\$1,900,000	\$25,000
Park/playground north of 86th Street, west of E. Old Shakopee Road	C			LT	\$600,000	\$25,000
Park/playground within 34th Avenue neighborhood east of 34th Avenue	C			LT	\$600,000	\$25,000
Park/playground within 34th Avenue neighborhood west of 34th Avenue	C			LT	\$600,000	\$25,000

Table 5.1 Summary of Proposed Public Improvements in the South Loop District *continued*

Public Improvement	Category ¹	Timing ²	Initial Cost in 2011 Dollars	Annual Maintenance Cost in 2011 Dollars
Land Use and Zoning				
Amend <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> and land uses	P	ST		\$ –
Amend Zoning – New zoning districts and standards	P	ST		\$ –
Redevelopment				
MOA parking and related improvements	O	OG		\$ –
Bloomington Central Station parking and related improvements	O	OG		\$ –
Sell Alpha Business Center parcels	O	ST		\$ –
Assist with marketing Metropolitan Airport Commission-owned parcels	O	ST		\$ –
<i>Business Improvement District Study</i> – Determine applicability to District	S	ST		\$ –
Sustainability				
<i>District Energy Study</i>	S	ST	\$250,000	\$ –
<i>Shared Parking Study</i>	S	ST	\$75,000	\$ –
Transit-oriented, urban-density Tax Increment Financing – Lobby, promote and support legislation	P	ST		\$10,000
Sustainable Building Code – Support sustainable improvements to state codes	P	OG		\$ –
Branding and Communication				
District signage branding – Study, construct gateway signage and pedestrian wayfinding	S	ST	\$450,000	\$5,000
Marketing South Loop – Website, video, social media, etc.	O	ST	\$35,500	\$5,000
Semaphores – Bronze paint scheme	C	OG	\$25,000	\$2,500
Short Term Total			\$84,945,500	

¹ Category type: C (Construction of infrastructure project); S (Study); P (Policy directive); O (Other)

² Timing: OG (Ongoing or along with development); ST (Short term, 1-7 years); M (Medium term, 8-19 years); LT (Long term, Greater than 20 years);

³ NA (Not applicable)

Source: City of Bloomington, 2012.

In addition to improvements inside the District, there are a number of public improvements proposed in the area surrounding the South

Loop that contribute to the future development and access to the District. These are listed in **Table 5.2, below.**

Table 5.2
Proposed Public Improvements Outside South Loop District

Improvement	Timing	Lead Agency
Construct tunnel under TH 77 north of I-494, to extend 77th Street from Richfield to 24th Avenue	Unknown – possibly by 2020	City of Richfield
Terminal 2 (Humphrey) gate expansion and additional parking	2010 to 2030 in 4 phases	Metropolitan Airports Commission
Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	2013	Minnesota Valley Transit Authority
East-west BRT route connecting Mall of America transit station and Southwest transit station in Eden Prairie with stops along American Boulevard	2020+ (depends on State funding)	Metro Transit
Inter-City Regional Trail from Minneapolis to 86th Street	2014	Three Rivers Park District
Old Cedar Bridge/Berm	Unknown	City of Bloomington

Source: City of Bloomington, 2012.



Proposed street entrance will enhance renovation of the MOA Transit Station.

5.2 Phasing Plan

Implementation of the plan recommendations is divided into three broad phases. In addition to the items below, improvements directly related to development proposals will occur as developments are approved. Structured parking is the most costly and the most important improvement for increasing density and establishing the walkable character of the South Loop. Using public resources for structured parking will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Initially, priority will be given to sites in the “L.” See **Section 3.3 Framework Components, pages 3.37-3.86.**

Short Term (2012-2019)

Short term improvements focus on the Lindau Lane/Link, the 34th Avenue/I-494 interchange projects, a park and MVNWR trailhead adjacent to Forest Glen Park (southwest corner of East Old Shakopee Road and Killebrew Drive), and redeveloping

parcels along Lindau Link between 24th and 30th Avenues. Short term improvements also include upgrading the Mall of America transit facility, a pedestrian bridge over Killebrew Drive, sidewalks/trails, boulevard trees, public utilities, and lighting, district identification and wayfinding

signs, and other items as shown in **Table 5.1**, pages 5.2-5.4, and **Table 5.3**, pages 5.6-5.8. Several studies will be prepared during this phase for public improvements that will occur in subsequent phases (for example, district identification and wayfinding signs). Key planning tasks that will be completed during this phase include amending the *Land Use Guide Plan* and corresponding zoning changes, including creation of two new land use categories and corresponding zoning districts.

Mid Term (2020-2029)

This phase is anticipated to begin when development of the “L” is nearing completion. Mid-term improvements focus on additional Minnesota Valley Natural Wildlife

Refuge trailheads, sidewalks/trails, boulevard trees, public utilities, lighting and completion of the wayfinding sign system.

Long Term (2030+)

These improvements will be associated with parcels that develop or redevelop after 2030. Cost estimates for these improvements are not included in the proposed financing strategy, but will be identified in future updates of this *District Plan*. Streetscape improvements will occur when new roads are constructed or existing road segments require major repair or reconstruction. Likewise, implementation of new parks will occur in conjunction with development of adjacent parcels.

Table 5.3 Short Term Improvements – First Phase 2012 to 2014

	Projects	Initial Cost in 2011 Dollars	Likely Funding Source ¹	Timing	Critical Path Activity	Managing Department
Roadway						
1	<i>Transportation Utility Study</i> – Determine how to fund street infrastructure for portions of project where development hasn’t occurred	\$50,000		2013	Study	Public Works
2	Local ITS (intelligent roadway systems) – Electronic wayfinding signage on local roads in South Loop	\$2,200,000	LL, AS	2012 2014	RFP Construct	Public Works
3	34th Avenue/ I-494 – Construct diverging diamond interchange	\$6,000,000	LL, OA, GR	2012 2013	Design Construct	Public Works
4	TH 77/Lindau/IKEA Way – Nordstrom Safety Improvement	\$1,500,000	LL, GR	2012 2014	Design Construct	Public Works
5	Lindau Link – Construct Lindau Lane from 24th to 30th Avenues	\$11,000,000	LL, GR	2012-13 2013-14	Design Construct	Public Works
6	Lindau Lane lowering – Lower road from TH 77 to 24th Avenue for Mall of America II	\$32,000,000	LL, TIF	2012-13 2013-14	Design Construct	Public Works
7	30th Avenue – Rebuild from American Boulevard to E. Old Shakopee Road	\$4,000,000	LL, GR	2013 2014	Design Construct	Public Works

Table 5.3 Short Term Improvements – First Phase 2012 to 2014 *continued*

	Projects	Initial Cost in 2011 Dollars	Likely Funding Source ¹	Timing	Critical Path Activity	Managing Dept.
Transit						
1	MOA Transit Station – Expand bus capacity and bring station ‘out’	\$6,000,000	LL, OA	2012	Master Plan	Port Authority
				2014	Construct	Public Works
2	Transit signal priority for Bus Rapid Transit	\$75,000	OA	2014		Public Works
3	Enhanced transit stops throughout District, excluding Lindau Link	\$2,000,000	OA	2014-15		Public Works
Sanitary Sewer and Water Distribution System						
1	Sanitary sewer/potable water cost apportionment study	\$60,000	SL	2012	Study	Public Works
2	Sanitary sewer improvements at Killebrew Drive/East Old Shakopee Road/24th Avenue South	\$1,000,000	GR	2013	Design	Public Works
Stormwater Management						
1	Street sweeping – Institute bi-monthly sweeping as BMP (best management practice), added aesthetic benefit	\$250,000	LL, SU	2012	Study	Public Works
				2013	Implement	
Pedestrian and Trail						
1	Pedestrian bridge over Killebrew Drive at 21st Avenue through Radisson Blu Hotel ramp	\$3,600,000	LL, GR, AS	2013	Construct	Public Works
2	Old Cedar Bridge/Berm – Construct land crossing in lieu of new bridge	\$9,000,000	GR, OA	TBD	Approval	Public Works
3	Increased level of service for sidewalk snow clearing in walkable areas			2013		Public Works
4	Refuge Trail – City continues to work to expand trail system below, but near, bluff edge	\$250,000	AS	2013	Plan	Parks and Rec
					Construct	Public Works
5	Refuge trailheads – Three of four entrance kiosks and trail leading into Minnesota Valley Natural Wildlife Refuge (Kelly Farm with development)	\$1,000,000	LL	2013	Plan	Parks and Rec
				2014	Construct	Public Works
Parks and Placemaking						
1	24th Avenue at Lindau Lane – Streetscape, gathering area/ plaza	\$500,000		2014	New Dev.	Planning/Public Works
2	24th Avenue at 82 Street – Streetscape, gathering area/plaza	\$250,000		2014	New Dev.	Planning/Public Works
3	Public art planning	To be announced		2013		Bloomington Center for the Arts
4	Park, trailhead, and trail near Ike’s Creek	\$1,900,000	LL, PD	2013		Parks and Rec
Land Use, Zoning and Redevelopment						
1	Amend <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> – Adopt <i>South Loop District Plan</i> into <i>Comprehensive Plan</i>			2012	Adoption	Planning
2	Amend Zoning – New zoning districts and descriptions, and standards (including less setback, shared parking, stormwater ditches, urban design guidelines) and apply to parcels			2012	Approval	Planning
3	Sell Alpha Business Center parcels			2012	Marketing	Port Authority
4	Assist with marketing Metropolitan Airport Commission parcels			2012	Marketing	Port Authority

Table 5.3 Short Term Improvements – First Phase 2012 to 2014 *continued*

	Projects	Initial Cost in 2011 Dollars	Likely Funding Source ¹	Timing	Critical Path Activity	Managing Dept.
Sustainability						
1	District Energy Study	\$250,000	LL, GR	2012		Port Authority
2	Shared Parking Study	\$75,000	SL	2013		Port Authority/ Public Works
3	Transit-oriented, urban-density Tax Increment Financing – Lobby, promote and support legislation			2012-14		Port Authority
Branding and Communication						
1	District signage branding – Study, construct gateway signage and pedestrian wayfinding	\$450,000	LL	2014	RFP/ Design	Planning
				2014-15	Construct	Public Works
2	Marketing – Website, video, social media, etc.	\$35,500	LL	2012		Communications

¹ Funding source: LL (Liquor and Lodging, aka 435); PD (Park Dedication Fund); AS (Assessment); ITF (Tax Increment Financing); SL (South Loop Permit Surcharge); OA (Other agency); GR (Grant); SU (Storm Utility); SP (Strategic Priorities)

Source: City of Bloomington, 2012.

5.3 Implementation Partners and Funding

Walkable, mixed use districts with a high level of amenities and multiple property owners are difficult and complex to build. Implementing all the recommendations in the South Loop District Plan is too big a task and its success is too important for the City to accomplish alone. Partners are needed for their perspectives, to help with the funding, and to work with the City on implementation.

Several partners may be directly involved in implementing and funding South Loop improvements, including:

State and Federal Government

The City periodically applies for State and Federal grants for large infrastructure projects. Such grants were recently awarded for the Lindau Lane corridor project and the 34th Avenue/I-494 interchange project. These two grants total nearly \$20 million.

Hennepin County

The City and Hennepin County have partnered on public improvement projects in South Loop, such as improvements for Bloomington Central Station and Polar Semiconductor. The City intends to continue partnering with Hennepin County on other improvements in the District, specifically for projects that create new employment and benefit from the exceptional transit infrastructure in South Loop.

City of Bloomington

The City's development contracts with the Mall of America and McGough Development (Bloomington Central Station) include commitments to use tax increment financing (TIF) for public improvements that facilitate the development and accomplish the City's goal of increasing the district's density. Additional on-site taxes are available to fund Mall-related public improvements.

In addition, this implementation plan proposes to use funds from existing city-wide Liquor and Lodging taxes, park dedication, building permit fees for environmental study, utility funds and special assessments. By policy, the City will place the highest priority on using these resources for improvements that help offset the extraordinary costs of high density development such as structured parking, transit improvements, place making features, skyways and parks, public spaces and some key transportation improvements.

State law requires these Liquor and Lodging revenues to be used within the South Loop District. By policy, the City Council has determined that use of the Liquor and Lodging funds must comply with goals of the South Loop District Plan and be primarily used for improvements related to developments where other public improvement funding sources are not available.

The City Council will establish and apply criteria and guidelines for

the use of public resources based on the source of the public funding and how the public improvements accomplish the goals and objectives in this plan. The highest priority for spending public funds will be to transform sites in the district from suburban to urban densities and to establish this density pattern along the Lindau Link spine.

Developers and Property Owners

Developers will ultimately be the ones who realize the vision for South Loop as a reality. Their participation and financial involvement in building public infrastructure (usually in the form of Special Assessments), as well as private improvements that complement the public space, will be necessary and crucial to the success of South Loop. *See sidebar.*

Business Improvement District

High-amenity, mixed use districts typically require a group of stakeholders to help maintain and manage the district. One way to accomplish stakeholder engagement and funding for high level services is a nonprofit business improvement district (BID). BIDs raise operating revenues by having property owners voluntarily raise their property taxes. In return, BIDs provide services that a majority of the property owners want such as additional street and sidewalk maintenance, landscaping, managing parking, removing snow, and providing branding and marketing. For the



Size improvements for future needs

When street or utility improvements are constructed, it is prudent to size those improvements to accommodate forecast development. For example, installing an 18-inch sewer pipe has a similar cost to installing a 15-inch pipe, but installing the incremental capacity later would double the total cost. Assessments are a common tool used to pay for infrastructure improvements that increase private property's value. Since future development may not occur for years, owners of sites with development potential routinely object to assessments based on future development. Deferred assessments could be used to mitigate this concern. A change to state law, allowing assessments to be deferred on any property, would allow the City to construct appropriately-sized improvements and the property owners would only pay for their share of those improvements at the time development occurs.

City's part, linking the establishment of a BID to a substantial, focused public investment program like the ones described in this section can be a highly effective tool to bring merchants and property owners on board. Other cities have learned that linking substantial public investment to the establishment of a BID is a highly effective strategy to bridge organizational hurdles connected with bringing property owners together.



Credit: SRF Kinley-Horn Associates

Proposed Lindau Link in 2030 illustrates public street improvements.